the weekly Standard

DECEMBER 13, 2010 • $4.95

DEFENSE POLICY IN 2011

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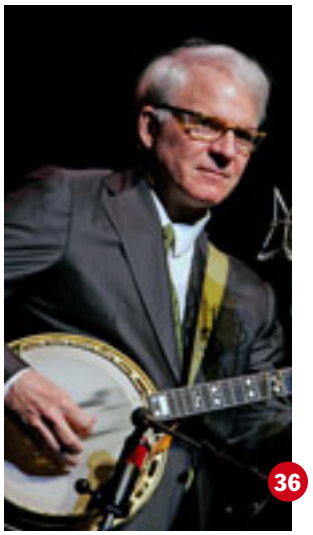

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The Kazakh Follies

Fans of Sacha Baron Cohen's 2006 film *Borat*, a "mockumentary" about the misadventures of a young Kazakh visitor to the United States, won't be disappointed by the WikiLeaks diplomatic cables. The American diplomats assigned to the former Soviet republics of the North and Central Caucasus report on events there with sharp wits and gimlet eyes. The Scrapbook enjoyed their dispatches so much, we've collected some of the best bits here. Remember them the next time a Central Asian autocrat denies his regime is hopelessly corrupt.

A Foreign Service officer in Dagestan sets the tone. He reports that Gadzhi Makhachev, a Duma member who also heads the national oil company, owns "luxurious houses in Makhachkala, Kaspiysk, Moscow, Paris, and San Diego" as well as "a large collection of luxury automobiles, including the Rolls Royce Silver Phantom in which Dalgat fetched Aida from her parents' reception. (Gadzhi gave us a lift in the Rolls once in Moscow, but the legroom was somewhat constricted by the presence of a Kalashnikov carbine at our feet.)"

The fun really starts when the action moves to Kazakhstan, the huge, mineral-rich nation led for decades by strongman Nursultan Nazarbayev. "Kazakhstan's political elites also have recreational tastes that are not so exotic," says one dispatch. "Some, in fact, prefer to relax the old-fashioned way. Defense Minister Akhmetov, a self-proclaimed workaholic, appears to enjoy loosening up in the tried and true 'homo sovieticus' style—i.e., drinking oneself into a stupor."

But that may be too harsh. After all, some in the Kazakh elite just want to dance. Here's a report on Kazakh prime minister Karim Masimov's trip to a trendy nightclub:

"Masimov led his companions on to Chocolat's dance floor soon after their arrival. The dance floor holds approximately 100 people, and at the time perhaps 50 patrons were dancing. However, Masimov himself chose to dance on an empty stage above the dance floor. His companions quickly tired but Masimov remained, dancing alone and animatedly on the stage for another 15-20 minutes."

Kazakh weddings also sound fun:

"In 2007, President Nazarbayev's son-in-law, Timur Kulibayev, celebrated his 41st birthday in grand style. At a small venue in Almaty, he hosted a private concert with some of Russia's biggest pop-stars. The headliner, however, was Elton John, to whom he reportedly paid one million pounds for this one-time appearance. . . . There have been separate reports that Nelly Furtado performed at the August 2007 birthday bash for Kulibayev's wife, Dinara Nazarbayeva."

The food, however, could use some improvement:

"It is not clear what [Kazakh oligarch Alexander] Mashkevich is spending his billions on, but it is certainly not culinary talent. On all four occasions the ambassador has eaten at one of his houses, the menu has been similar and focused on beshparmak (boiled meat and noodles) and plov. The wait staff appeared to be graduates of a Soviet cafeteria training academy."

Or maybe American diplomats are just picky. We can't say we blame them: It's easy to become cynical when confronted by such a desolate—geographically and morally—landscape. "The ambassador [to Kazakhstan] asked if the corruption and infighting are worse now than before. . . . [Oil tycoon Maksat] Idenov paused, thought, and then replied, 'No, not really. It's business as usual.'" Some things never change. ♦

Deborah Solomon's Comeuppance

Deborah Solomon has annoyed *New York Times Magazine* readers for years with her obnoxious, reflexively liberal interviews of public figures ("You probably eat a lot of cheese," she told Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin in an interview earlier this year). But at least print subscribers can turn the page. The audience members at the 92nd Street Y in New York City on November 29 weren't so lucky. After being forced to endure Solomon's interview of comic Steve Martin live on stage, the disappointed crowd asked for and received their money back.

According to the *Times*, 900 people spent $50 per ticket expecting to hear Martin discuss his career as a television and film actor. Instead, they heard Solomon and Martin drone on about the art world. "Mr. Martin is an avid art collector," reports the *Times*, "and Ms. Solomon has written art criticism." That's swell, but the audience was more interested in *The Jerk* and *Father of the Bride Part II* than *The Scream* and *Les Desmoiselles d'Avignon*. Halfway through the interview, a member of the Y's staff passed a note to Solomon asking her to switch topics. "The audience cheered when Ms. Solomon read aloud the note."

Solomon responded to the rebuff in typical liberal fashion: The audience, she told her newspaper, was a bunch of unsophisticated dolts. "Frankly, you would think that an audience in New York, at the 92nd Street Y, would be interested in hearing about art and artists. I had no idea that the Y programmers wanted me to talk to Steve instead on what it's like to host the Oscars or appear in *It's Complicated* with Alec Baldwin." The rubes.

Martin's appraisal of the situation was more realistic, however. "As for the Y's standard of excellence," he said, "it can't be that high because this is the second time I've appeared there." He said it, not us. ♦

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There Are Leaks & Then There Are Leaks

The *New York Times*, November 20, 2009:

> A thick file of private emails and unpublished documents generated by an array of climate scientists over 13 years was obtained by a hacker from a British university climate research center and has since spread widely across the Internet starting Thursday afternoon. Before they propagated, the purloined documents, nearly 200 megabytes in all, were uploaded surreptitiously on Tuesday to a server supporting the global warming Web site realclimate.org, along with a draft mock post, said Gavin Schmidt, a NASA climate scientist managing that blog. He pulled the plug before the fake post was published. . . .
>
> The documents appear to have been acquired illegally and contain all manner of private information and statements that were never intended for the public eye, so they won't be posted here.

The *New York Times*, November 29, 2010:

> The articles published today and in coming days are based on thousands of United States embassy cables, the daily reports from the field intended for the eyes of senior policy makers in Washington. The *New York Times* and a number of publications in Europe were given access to the material several weeks ago and agreed to begin publication of articles based on the cables online on Sunday. The *Times* believes that the documents serve an important public interest, illuminating the goals, successes, compromises and frustrations of American diplomacy in a way that other accounts cannot match. . . .
>
> The documents—some 250,000 individual cables, the daily traffic between the State Department and more than 270 American diplomatic outposts around the world—were made available to the *Times* by a source who insisted on anonymity. They were originally obtained by WikiLeaks, an organization devoted to exposing official secrets, allegedly from a disenchanted, low-level Army intelligence analyst who exploited a security loophole.

Besides the obvious double standard here, The Scrapbook enjoys the divergence in the vocabulary used by the *Times* to discuss leaks of which it approves and those of which it disapproves. *Hacker*, *purloined*, *surreptitiously*, *illegally*—none of these judgmental words make the grade when it comes to discussing WikiLeaks, which doesn't "purloin" but "obtains" its wares. Naturally. After all, it's "an organization devoted to exposing official secrets"—an anodyne phrase that, come to think of it, also describes the *New York Times* these days. ♦

Tweeting the Prince

If you've glanced at a supermarket or airport magazine rack recently, you know that spring 2011 will bring us *The Royal Wedding Part Deux: William and Kate*. What you may not have heard is that that great American institution Snoop Dogg is trying to get in on the act. Since Prince Harry, a well-known fan of hip-hop, has been put in charge of the engagement party, there may be something to this rumor.

Mr. Dogg has officially dedicated, via Twitter, his new single "Wet" to Prince William for his bachelor party. (A note of caution from The Scrapbook to our sensitive readers: The song is exceptionally raunchy.) "This song is tha one for Prince William's stag do," tweeted Snoop, suggesting, according to the *Guardian*, that "US president Barack Obama [also] get in on the action. 'U know they need tha Top Doggs in USA to roll to [the] bachelor party,' he wrote. '@BarackObama, u in?'"

The rapper has not been formally approached to perform, but he is reportedly "really interested." No word yet on whether the president will drop by the "stag do." The Scrapbook will be collecting our one pound notes for you, Sir, just in case. ♦

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Take a Hike

In order to generate much needed funds, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, or Metro for short, decided to hike fares this past summer. But as the *Washington Post* reported last week, "The across-the-board fare increase imposed by Metro this summer has led to a drop in bus ridership and less-than-expected rail revenue as a result of changing travel patterns, an initial analysis by Metro shows."

Revenue, ridership on Metro fall short

Commuters changed habits after 2009 fare increases, study shows

BY ANN SCOTT TYSON

How on earth could this happen? Shouldn't an increase in fares simply have led to an increase in revenue? Unless, of course, consumers actually altered their behavior because of the change in price. According to the analysis, some Metro users decided to ride the bus instead of the train, which costs more. Others used rail but during offpeak hours. And still others chose to walk. (Whether or not some commuters ended up driving to work remains classified.)

There are those who argue that the higher the price of a good, the less the demand for it. Or something like that. Who knows? Meanwhile, THE SCRAPBOOK has learned the Obama administration is looking into whether or not this sort of unintended consequence could have implications for its tax policies. ♦

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Polyepoxide Conservatism

The conservative mood starts with a skepticism and a suspicion about change. *Revolution!* shout the revolutionaries, and conservatives expect the new boss to look a whole lot like the old boss. *Make It New!* demand the modernists, and conservatives wonder why they have to make anything at all. *Hope and Change!* President Obama promised us, and hope and change we got, although the hope was that the Democrats would lose the 2010 midterms, and the change was mostly of the *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?* kind.

Anyway, to be a conservative is to know, way down in your gut, that no transformation comes without a price. Civilization is held together with duct tape and baling wire; it's amazing the rickety thing works at all. Radicals imagine they can swap out whole sections, leaving the rest unaffected, while conservatives hew to the creed, If it ain't broke don't fix it, and if it is buy a good repair manual.

I'm here to tell you, however, that conservatives are wrong. It's not true that all social change is bad. It isn't the case that every technological alteration bleeds unintended consequences. We shouldn't assume that reformation of manners and morals always edges us down the slippery slope toward the abyss.

Only most of them. Look, it's a simple truth that American public food has improved over the last 30 years. Remember the plastic-wrapped sandwiches that used to be the only sustenance you could get at night in a bus station? Remember artificially flavored grape soda? Remember, God help us, Vienna sausages in a can? *The oldest hath borne most: we that are young / Shall never see so much, nor live so long.*

Of course, this change in cuisine means a simple sandwich at a New York takeout joint is now salametti and bresaola—with arugula, mesclun, and roasted peppers, all on rosemary focaccia—and costs only slightly less than a weekend ski trip. You might think that a small price to pay for never again having to see the quivering of lime Jell-O with carrot shavings at the church potluck, and even conservatives would have to admit that you'd be right. But those same conservatives would point out that a price it is, nonetheless.

MATT COLLINS

Similarly, they'd admit, coffee has improved enormously in this country since 1975—when the average diner's cup of joe had been stewing angrily in the industrial vat of a percolator since the short-order cook arrived at 6:00 that morning. But the price of this new and better coffee is a chain shop at every other intersection, smugly assuring you it doesn't buy beans from dictators. At least, not right-wing dictators.

Meanwhile, don't talk to me about the Internet, which has produced a generation of students for whom the idea of research is to see if anyone has Twittered about the topic lately. And don't mention email, which has pretty much ruined my work habits. No, the one unequivocally good change of my lifetime—the one transformation without bad consequences, the definitive refutation of conservatism—is glue.

There was a time in this country when your glue choices began with school paste, which wouldn't hold together two pieces of paper. You then moved to Elmer's Glue, which was made by boiling down cow bones and skin, prompting the Borden company to market it with a cute drawing of the bull they killed to make it. Anyway, Elmer's was lumpy and inferior, and if you wanted something more precise, you went on to model-airplane glue. Which made you high and then killed you. And if that wasn't enough, you moved all the way up to Krazy Glue, the whole tube of which dried out after one use and anyway was useful only for permanently fusing your fingers together.

Sales clerks used to keep razor blades by the cash register for scraping the price stickers off. Everybody I knew had at least one appliance or piece of furniture on which, years later, you could still see the sticky residue of a removed label. The low-tack adhesive of Post-It notes didn't exist for temporary sticking, and the permanence of polyepoxide thermosetting polymers hadn't yet been found for laminated beams. Everything about gluing is better now than it used to be, and we haven't had to pay a price in unintended consequences. Conservatives are just wrong in their suspicion of change.

Unless, of course, you think that the putting of things back together is inherently a conservative thing to do. Radicals want to unglue society. They want to break the adhesion of culture, the tensile strength of civilization. But conservatives know that things don't have to fall apart. Turns out the center actually can hold, if you have a good enough polyepoxide thermosetting polymer.

Joseph Bottum

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Window of Opportunity

Did America hold an election last month? Sometimes it's hard to tell. Congress is back in town, and the Democratic majorities in the House and Senate are acting as though the shellacking of 2010 never happened. Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid, oblivious as usual, have stuffed this Christmas turkey of a lame duck session with votes on side issues like Don't Ask, Don't Tell, the DREAM Act immigration amnesty, and a resolution "supporting the goals and ideals of National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day." Meanwhile, back in the real world, unemployment climbed to 9.8 percent, the debt is piling up, and the economy is struggling.

Important business remains undone. Congress still hasn't passed a budget. Nor has it extended the tax rates that are due to expire in a few weeks. What Kevin Phillips once dubbed the "reactionary left" is busy running television ads urging President Obama to raise taxes on the rich, while House Democrats hold meaningless votes intended to expose Republicans as plutocrats. The obvious compromise—extension of current tax rates for two to three years in exchange for a vote to extend unemployment insurance—languishes on the table.

Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson

NEWSCOM

The dysfunction and desperation of the waning Democratic majority is staggering. But is anyone really surprised? Soon the House will be under new management and Harry Reid will have fewer votes in the Senate. Come January, Speaker John Boehner will try to chart a new course, to demonstrate that conservatives can govern responsibly, to start repairing America's broken budget. Around 80 new, Tea Partying Republicans will be there to back him up. We're happy to report that a center-right fiscal coalition is beginning to emerge outside Congress, as well.

The president's debt commission may have failed to reach a consensus. Its plan may rely too heavily on tax hikes, defense cuts, and the Obamacare model of health insurance for our taste. But, as commission member Paul Ryan of Wisconsin pointed out the other day, chairmen Erskine Bowles and Alan Simpson have provided a valuable service nonetheless. They've shown that the rising tide of red ink is a huge problem. They've proven that Democrats and Republicans can agree that the situation must be addressed. They've acknowledged that tax hikes alone won't balance the budget. They've proposed a drastic and intriguing overhaul of the tax code that would close subsidies and loopholes in exchange for lower rates.

So the Bowles-Simpson plan is a step in the right direction. But it's only a baby step, and with the left foot. The commission's true legacy may be in the number of additional plans it's inspired. Representative Ryan's Roadmap for America's Future, released in 2008, suddenly has brothers and sisters. Ryan and Alice Rivlin, President Clinton's former budget director, have come up with a Medicare proposal that would protect the current system of benefits for everyone 55 years old and over while transforming Medicare for future generations. Back in August, Paul Volcker's commission warned that America's tax code is too complicated and the corporate tax rate too high. The surplus of center-right ideas has forced the left to get in on the act. Representative Jan Schakowsky of Illinois and a bunch of liberal groups have all released their own plans for reducing the debt. For these folks, just talking about the deficit is a concession.

President Obama himself is the best evidence of how deficit politics have shifted to the right. He spent the last two years arguing that deficit spending—blithely tripled on his watch—was necessary to create jobs. Like a good Keynesian, Obama said that when consumers

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stopped spending, government needed to step in and fill the gap. But the failure of his economic program contributed to the Republicans' historic gains in the midterm elections. Last week the president changed his tune, calling for a pay freeze for nondefense government employees and saying that "small-businesses and families are tightening their belts. Their government should too." Somebody get a medic—those words are enough to drive Paul Krugman into cardiac arrest.

These reports and proposals will be worthless, however, if they aren't taken up by a bold and imaginative leader. In our system of government, that responsibility falls to the president. And all that prevents President Obama from taking up the challenge of fiscal responsibility are his own ideological commitments and the left wing of his party. He'd benefit from abandoning both.

And if the president punts? Then it will be up to someone like Ryan to explain why an overhaul of the American welfare state is both necessary and beneficial. And why we must act quickly, before this window of opportunity slams shut on our fingers.

—Matthew Continetti

The Iran Connection

On December 1, Undersecretary of State William Burns appeared before the House Foreign Affairs Committee to brief members of Congress on Iran. He touted the effectiveness of the latest round of sanctions and then listed some "wider actions of the Iranian leadership" that cause concern. He cited the regime's "longstanding support for violent terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas; its opposition to Middle East peace; its repugnant rhetoric about Israel, the Holocaust, 9/11, and so much else; and its brutal repression of its own citizens."

These are the offenses that American diplomats list perfunctorily before reiterating their eagerness to engage with that same Iranian leadership. Burns did not disappoint. He concluded by noting that "there is still time for diplomacy" and "still room for a renewed effort to break down mistrust, and begin a careful, phased process of building confidence between Iran and the international community." And, lest anyone miss his obvious message, Burns said again: "The door is still open to serious negotiation, if Iran is prepared to walk through it."

Yet Burns said nothing about Iran's efforts to fund, train, and equip jihadists in Afghanistan. He said nothing about the extensive Iranian backing of radical Shiite groups in Iraq over the past seven years. He said nothing of Iran's ongoing support for al Qaeda—support that might have been particularly interesting to his audience of American lawmakers.

In his remarks on Capitol Hill, Burns simply chose not to mention that the leaders of Iran have been fighting a stealth war against the United States, its soldiers, and its citizens. It is this fact that complicates the Obama administration's efforts to engage Iran. So it is simply set aside.

Such evasion is becoming more difficult, however. State Department cables made public as part of the WikiLeaks document dump add to our already substantial knowledge of Iranian malfeasance—and suggest that Iran may actually be increasing its lethal efforts.

One leaked cable contained a stunning revelation. On September 5, 2009, Saudi prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, the kingdom's longtime interior minister, met with President Obama's chief counterterrorism adviser, John Brennan. Prince Nayef was especially concerned about al Qaeda's attacks inside the kingdom, as his son

had almost been killed by a suicide bomber eight days earlier. A section of the cable, entitled "Iran Promoting Terrorism," begins with this sentence:

> Nayef complained that over the past two years Iran has hosted Saudis (all Sunnis)—including Osama bin Laden's son Ibrahim—who had contacts with terrorists and worked against the Kingdom.

Ibrahim bin Laden is, according to U.S. intelligence officials, a rising star within al Qaeda. Nayef went on to explain that he and other Saudi officials have attempted to get the Iranians to turn over Ibrahim bin Laden and his al Qaeda cohorts. They have failed. Brennan, for his

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part, "agreed that Iran had the capacity to cause trouble, and assured the Prince that the [U.S. government] was very concerned and looking carefully at the situation." The administration, however, wasn't going to allow this revelation to get in the way of its pursuit of talks with the mullahs. "President Obama's willingness to talk to the Iranians did not mean he did not understand the problem," the cable says Brennan told Prince Nayef.

News of the cable is significant but unsurprising. For years, Iran has harbored senior al Qaeda terrorists such as Saif al-Adel, wanted for his role in the 1998 embassy bombings, as well as members of both Osama bin Laden's and Ayman al-Zawahiri's families. Iranian support for the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan is well-documented. Intelligence from as far back as 2004 has included detailed reporting on Iranian provision of arms and funding for insurgents there. Over the past several years, moreover, intelligence officials have provided policymakers with detailed reporting on another worrisome indication of Iranian support for America's enemies: Iranian training of terrorists on Iranian soil.

A leaked State Department cable dated November 10, 2007, recounts a meeting between Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman and Afghan president Hamid Karzai. Edelman, according to the cable, urged that the Afghan government "act in concert with the U.S. to end Iranian lethal support to the Taliban before it reaches the same levels as in Iraq." Edelman was particularly concerned about Iran providing the Taliban with explosively formed projectile weapons (EFPs), which had been intercepted by British troops, and shoulder-fired missiles. President Karzai concurred with Edelman's assessment. The State Department's cable reads: "Karzai agreed that Iran has to be confronted, adding without elaboration that we need to do so 'effectively.'"

Edelman, the cable goes on, "noted the military situation in Farah Province and asked Karzai whether there might be an Iranian hand behind recent Taliban attacks." Furthermore, Edelman "recalled maps of the myriad smuggling routes from Iran into Afghanistan and reports of Taliban recruits training at sites in Iran, although there was no concrete evidence of direct Iranian involvement."

By 2008, questions about the level of Iranian support for insurgents had been answered. CIA director Michael Hayden said such backing had been approved "at the highest levels" of the Iranian regime.

And it continues to this day.

Military press releases regularly note that coalition forces are targeting Taliban commanders with links to both Iran and al Qaeda. In one such press release from November 25, 2010, the coalition said it had launched a raid in Farah Province targeting a "Taliban leader" who is a "key foreign-fighter facilitator . . . after intelligence reports indicated his recent return to Afghanistan from Iran." This Taliban commander "provides a conduit for foreign fighters from an array of terrorist networks, including al Qaeda, to enter the country and fight for the Taliban." According to ISAF, he "acts on behalf of terrorist cells to move foreign fighters into Farah and Helmand via Iran."

There are literally hundreds of similar examples. There is evidence of Iranian intelligence officers toting cash across the border, evidence of Iranian payments to insurgents who have killed American or Afghan soldiers, evidence of Iranian-made C4 explosives being put to use in suicide attacks. The first cache of leaked documents released by WikiLeaks showed that ISAF receives persistent reports of collusion between Iran, the Taliban, and al Qaeda in Afghanistan. What began years ago as carefully planned tactical support for insurgents has grown into widespread Iranian assistance. In Nimruz Province in October, U.S. and Afghan forces intercepted a shipment of 19 tons of explosives from Iran.

The same is true in Iraq. Another leaked cable, this one written by the U.S. embassy in Baghdad in April 2009, outlines a strategy for countering the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps's influence in Iraq as America draws down her forces there. "Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force (IRGC-QF) officers are active in Iraq, conducting traditional espionage and supporting violent extremists," the cable reads. And while the United States has "succeeded in stopping some IRGC-QF activity through military operations and diplomatic engagement," there remains work to be done. In particular, the cable says, the IRGC-QF is still smuggling "lethal" explosively formed projectiles into Iraq. A cable from December 24, 2008, discusses a letter to the president of Armenia, in which Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte conveys "our deep concerns about Armenia's transfer of Arms to Iran which resulted in the death and injury of U.S. soldiers in Iraq."

When the United States and its negotiating partners sit down with the Iranians this week, the talks will focus almost exclusively on Iran's nuclear program. But the United States is concerned about the Iranian nuclear program not just because of nuclear weapons, but because of what the Iranian leadership plans to do with them.

Nearly a decade after the 9/11 attacks, not only do we have abundant evidence that Iran, the world's foremost state sponsor of terror, supports al Qaeda. We also have evidence that Iran actively assists terrorists and insurgents targeting our soldiers and diplomats in two war zones. Why are our leaders so afraid to talk about it?

—Stephen F. Hayes & Thomas Joscelyn

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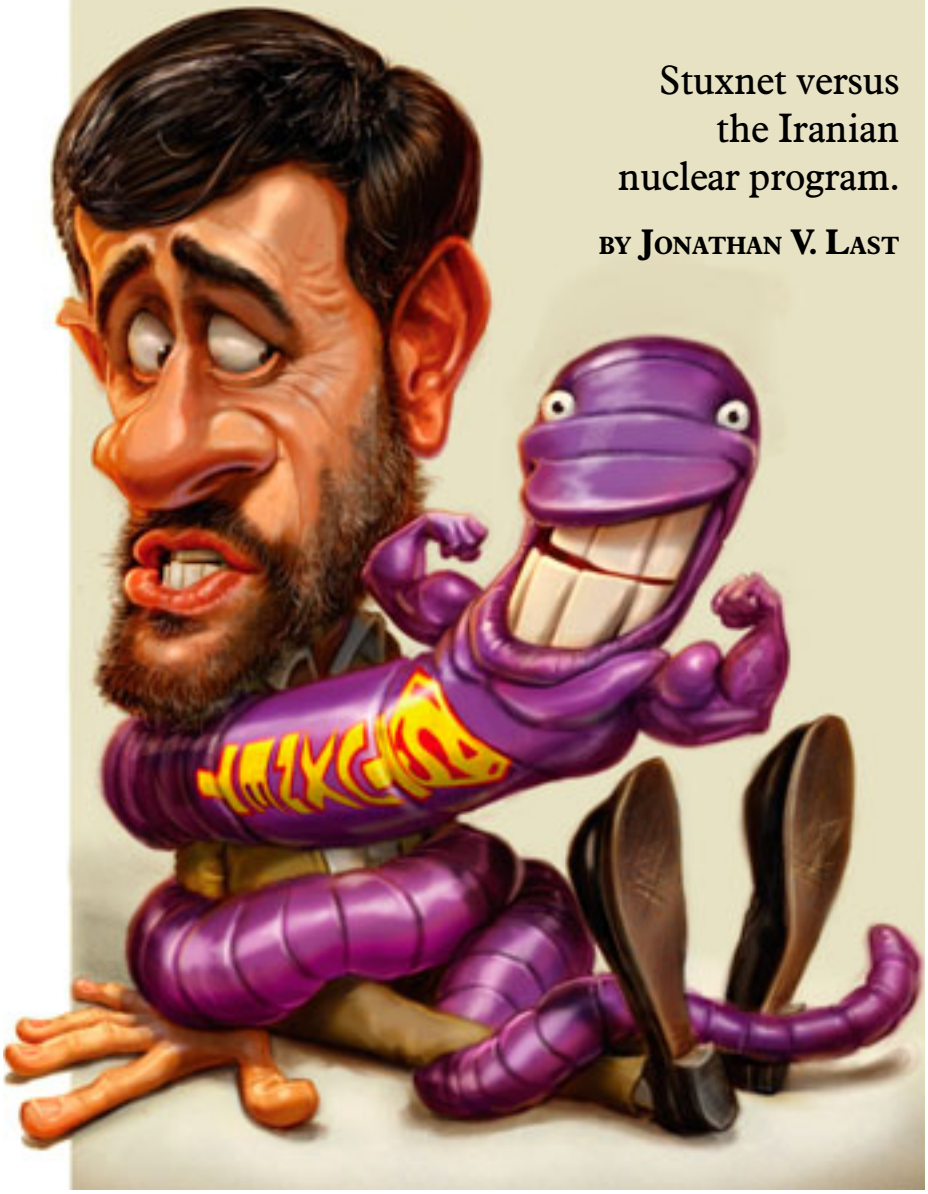
How the Worm Turned

Stuxnet versus the Iranian nuclear program.

BY JONATHAN V. LAST



GARY LOCKE

Last week Mahmoud Ahmadinejad acknowledged that Iran's uranium enrichment program had suffered a setback: "They were able to disable on a limited basis some of our centrifuges by software installed in electronic equipment," the Iranian president told reporters.

Jonathan V. Last is a senior writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

This was something of an understatement. Iran's uranium enrichment program appears to have been hobbled for the better part of a year, its technical resources drained and its human resources cast into disarray. The "software" in question was a computer worm called Stuxnet, which is already being viewed as the greatest triumph in the short history of cyberwarfare.

Stuxnet first surfaced on June 17 of this year when a digital security company in Minsk, VirusBlokAda, discovered it on a computer belonging to one of its Iranian clients. It quickly became clear that Stuxnet was not an ordinary piece of malware.

Stuxnet is not a virus, but a worm. Viruses piggyback on programs already resident in a computer. Worms are programs in their own right, which hide within a computer and stealthily propagate themselves onto other machines. After nearly a month of study, cybersecurity engineers determined that Stuxnet was designed to tamper with industrial systems built by the German firm Siemens by overriding their supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) protocols. Which is to say that, unlike most malware, which exists to manipulate merely virtual operations, Stuxnet would have real-world consequences: It wanted to commandeer the workings of a large, industrial facility, like a power plant, or a dam, or a factory. Exactly what kind of facility was still a mystery.

From the beginning, everything about Stuxnet was anomalous. Worms that tampered with SCADA are not unheard of, but are exceptionally rare. And as a physical piece of code, Stuxnet was enormous—weighing in at half a megabyte, it dwarfed the average piece of malware by many multiples. Finally, there was its infection radius. Stuxnet found its way onto roughly 100,000 computers worldwide; 60 percent of these were in Iran.

As a work of engineering, Stuxnet's power and elegance made it even more intriguing. Most industrial systems are run on computers which use Microsoft's Windows operating system. Hackers constantly probe software for what are known as "zero day" vulnerabilities, weak points in the code never foreseen by the original programmers. On a sophisticated and ubiquitous piece of software such as Windows, discovering even a single zero day vulnerability is extremely uncommon. The makers of Stuxnet found, and utilized, four of them. No

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one in cybersecurity had ever seen anything like it.

The worm gained initial access to a system through an ordinary USB drive. Picture what happens when you plug a flash drive into your computer. The machine performs a number of tasks automatically; one of them is pulling up icons to be displayed on your screen, representing the data on the drive. On an infected USB drive, Stuxnet exploited this routine to pull the worm onto the computer.

The challenge is that once on the machine, the worm becomes visible to security protocols, which constantly query files looking for malware. To disguise itself, Stuxnet installed what's called a "rootkit"—a piece of code that intercepts security queries and sends back false "safe" messages, indicating that the worm is innocuous.

But installing a rootkit requires using drivers, of which Windows machines are well trained to be suspicious. Windows requires that all drivers provide verification that they're on the up-and-up through presentation of a secure digital signature. These digital keys are closely guarded secrets. Stuxnet's malicious drivers presented genuine signatures from two genuine computer companies, Realtek Semiconductor and JMichron Technologies. Both firms have offices in the same facility, Hsinchu Science Park, in Taiwan. Either by electronic trickery or a brick-and-mortar heist job, the creators of Stuxnet stole these keys—and in a sophisticated enough manner that no one knew they had been compromised.

So to recap: The security keys enable the drivers, which allow the installation of the rootkit, which hides the worm that was delivered by the corrupt USB drive. Stuxnet's next job was to propagate itself efficiently but quietly. Whenever another USB drive was inserted into an infected computer, it became infected, too. But in order to reduce traceability, Stuxnet allowed each infected USB drive to pass the worm onto only three computers.

Stuxnet spread in other ways, too. It was not designed to propagate over the Internet at large, but could move across local networks using print spoolers. In any group of computers which shared a printer, when one computer became infected, Stuxnet quickly crawled through the printer to contaminate the others. Once it reached a computer with access to the Internet, it began communicating with command-and-control servers located in Denmark and Malaysia. (Whoever was running the operation took these servers offline after Stuxnet was discovered.) While they were functional, Stuxnet delivered information it had gathered about the systems it had invaded to the servers and requested updated versions of itself. Several different versions of Stuxnet have been isolated, meaning that the programmers were refining the worm, even after it was released.

Defense Policy IN 2011

Finally, there's the actual payload. Once a resident of a Windows machine, Stuxnet looked for WinCC and PCS 7 SCADA programs. If the machine had neither of these, then Stuxnet merely went about the business of spreading itself. But on computers with one of these two programs, Stuxnet began reprogramming the programmable logic control (PLC) software and making changes in a piece of code called Operational Block 35. For months, no one knew exactly what Stuxnet was looking for with this block of code or what it intended to do once it found it. Three weeks ago, that changed.

As cybersecurity engineer Ralph Langner puts it, Stuxnet was one weapon with two warheads. The first payload was aimed at the Siemens S7-417 controller at Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant. The second targeted the Siemens S7-315 controller at the Natanz centrifuge operation, where uranium is processed and enriched. At Bushehr, Stuxnet likely attempted to degrade the facility's steam turbine, with unknown results. But the attack on Natanz seems to have succeeded brilliantly.

Once again, Stuxnet's design was unexpectedly elegant. With control of the centrifuge system at Natanz, the worm could have triggered a single, catastrophic incident. Instead, Stuxnet took over the centrifuge's frequency converters during the course of everyday operation and induced tiny bursts of speed in the machinery, followed by abrupt decelerations. These speed changes stressed the centrifuge's components. Parts wore out quickly, centrifuges broke mysteriously. The uranium being processed was corrupted. And all the while, Stuxnet kept sending normal feedback to the Iranians, telling them that, from the computer's standpoint, the system was operating like clockwork. This slow burn went on for a year, with the Iranians becoming increasingly exasperated by what looked like sabotage, and smelled like sabotage, but what their computers assured them was perfectly routine.

In sum, Stuxnet wasted a year's worth of enrichment efforts at Natanz, ate through centrifuge components and uranium stores, sowed chaos within Iran's nuclear program, and will likely force Iran to spend another year disinfecting its systems before they can operate at peak levels again. All in all, a successful operation.

Who deserves credit for Stuxnet? There are three possibilities: (1) a lone state actor; (2) a consortium of states; or (3) a private group. Each of these is at first glance plausible. But the exploit was even more complicated than it appears on first inspection.

The planning and implementation of Stuxnet involved three layers of complication. First, there's the sophistication of the worm itself. Microsoft estimates that the coding of Stuxnet consumed somewhere in the neighborhood of 10,000 man-work days. With a team of 30 to 50 programmers, that's a year or two of effort, at least. Between the workload, the zero day exploits, and the innovative design of the worm, Stuxnet required not just

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VOICES FROM THE RIGHT
ON A WASTEFUL EARMARK THAT'S JUST WRONG.

"History is replete with examples of wasteful defense spending, such as the $436 hammer and the $640 toilet seat. The latest is a $2.9 billion alternate engine for the Joint Strike Fighter. This time Congress is to blame, not the Pentagon. Competition does not mean buying two of everything. Unfortunately, members of Congress often ensure that losing bidders receive pork-barrel earmarks."

Tom Schatz, *Council for Citizens Against Government Waste*

"For those who aren't familiar with the alternate engine for the Joint Strike Fighter, it's the military's version of a Bridge To Nowhere. The Pentagon has said repeatedly it doesn't want or need the engine, and both the Bush and Obama administrations have tried to eliminate it. You can't get more bipartisan than that. But a stubborn Congress controls the purse strings and won't relent."

Cal Thomas, *USA Today*

"The $3 billion contract under consideration would fund the program for the next 6 years, on the faulty assumption that this artificially constructed competition will produce savings for taxpayers…we urge you to vote against any funding for the Joint Strike Fighter engine program and look forward to working with you to end the wasteful earmark process as a whole."

Grover Norquist, *Americans for Tax Reform*

"GE typifies the large rent-seeking companies that wage battle not in the marketplace, but in the halls of Congress. Taxpayers and consumers cannot afford to fund the pet projects of politicians and corporations, especially in an economic downturn. Unfortunately, the consumer's voice has been lost in the din of corporations scrambling for government handouts."

Matt Kibbe, *President, FreedomWorks*

"For Congress to insist on an alternative engine, which costs billions on the front end for less-than-concrete savings on the back end, is fiscally unsound. It's time to get out of the alternative engine morass and instead work harder to keep the whole F-35 program on-time and on-budget."

Pete Sepp, *Executive Vice President, National Taxpayers Union*

"The three billion dollars that supporters of this program are seeking for a favored contractor through the earmark process is money that the White House and the Pentagon under both Republican and Democratic Presidents feel does not need to be spent for any valid national security or defense purpose."

David Keene, *Chairman, The American Conservative Union*

Look at the facts. Some in Congress still wish to continue wasting $2.9 billion on an extra engine for the Joint Strike Fighter. All while outsourcing hundreds of American jobs to factories in the United Kingdom. Budget watchdog groups agree that taxpayers and our nation can't afford it. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates says his department doesn't want this earmark, can't find a business case for the extra engine that makes sense, and that there is no benefit to further competition. Tell your Congressional representatives to stop the funding for this wasteful earmark **at f135engine.com.**

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time but enormous technical sophistication and sizable financial resources.

On the next level, the creators of Stuxnet needed competency in the more traditional cloak-and-dagger elements of espionage. The digital verification certificates had to be stolen from the companies in Taiwan, and the infected USB drives had to be planted on or around the community of people who worked in the Iranian nuclear program—modern espionage tradecraft at its best.

The final complication is that vast amounts of expertise in nuclear engineering were required. It's not enough to design a worm to infiltrate a nuclear plant—Stuxnet's creators had to know (1) what parts of the systems to target, (2) the intricacies of the systems' designs, and (3) how to manipulate the systems to achieve the desired effects. This knowledge base might have been the most difficult to obtain. The world is full of enterprising computer jocks; there are only so many people who understand exactly how centrifuges and nuclear reactors work and the minute complexities of Siemens's S7-315 and S7-417 control systems. It seems unlikely that a private party—a group of rogue hackers or interested civilians—could amass the requisite competencies in all three of these areas.

So who was it—the Israelis, the United States, Germany, Russia? Some combination of the above? We may never know. Given the scope of the operation, it's amazing that we understand as much as we already do about Stuxnet. Most prior acts of cyberwarfare took place in the shadows; Stuxnet is the first serious cyberweapon to be caught in the wild by civilians. As a result, we've witnessed over the last few months an open-source investigation involving experts in different disciplines from around the world. The techies will continue to push and prod Stuxnet, trying to understand how it worked—and how systems can be protected from a similar attack.

Because, in fundamental ways, cyberwar is no different from real war. Innovations can be copied, and there is always the potential for enemies to turn them to their advantage. ♦

Diplomatic Illusions

Why negotiations with Iran will never work.

BY REUEL MARC GERECHT

Although it's way too soon to know how the WikiLeaks release of classified U.S. documents will play out historically, it is interesting to compare two cables brought to light by the document dump—one written by Bruce Laingen, the chargé d'affaires in Tehran at the time of the Iranian revolution in 1979, and the other written by a U.S. diplomat in Baghdad in 2007 recounting conversations between the British ambassador to Iran, Geoffrey Adams, and American civilian officials and military officers. Both cables are meant to tutor their readers on how to negotiate with the Iranian regime.

The two are similar to guides to negotiating with Iranians written for American officials in the Obama administration by the retired-then-rehired Foreign Service officer John Limbert. Like Laingen, Limbert was taken hostage in 1979 after the imam's "students" seized the U.S. embassy. Limbert is a master of the Persian language; the British ambassador has an academic and professional background in the Arab world; Laingen, who served in the Navy in World War II, was a career diplomat who spent much of his career in the Greater Middle East (Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan). Looking at the counsel offered by Laingen, Adams, and Limbert across three decades allows us to appreciate how hard it is for Westerners to deal with faithful Muslims who see a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West.

President Obama has not yet publicly abandoned diplomacy with the Islamic Republic. In the European-led talks with Iran, in which the United States will also participate, slated to begin on December 6 in Geneva, the administration is undoubtedly hoping that Iran might chat seriously about halting uranium enrichment. The increasing pain inflicted by the American-led sanctions regime could, diplomats pray, make this time different. The Americans and the Europeans will certainly offer more carrots to Tehran even though the Europeans, who've endeavored to cajole the Iranians to stop uranium enrichment since 2003, have become even more pessimistic than the Americans about their chances.

Washington's Iran policy has now moved irreversibly in favor of economic coercion as the principal means to induce a change of behavior in Tehran. It's increasingly clear that the administration would, truth be told, prefer a change of regime in Iran—there has been real evolution since the "Age-of-Aquarius" early days of the Obama presidency—but intellectually and emotionally such sentiments are difficult for this administration to express. And such undiplomatic thoughts would be publicly upsetting for our European allies, even though, as WikiLeaks documents make clear, they are becoming common in private exchanges. (When French national security adviser Jean-David Levitte describes Iran's diplomatic engagement with the West on the nuclear issue as a "farce" and calls the Tehran regime "fascist," it's probably safe to conclude that the French no longer put much faith in "constructive engagement.")

Reuel Marc Gerecht is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard *and a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. His book* The Wave: Man, God, and the Ballot Box in the Middle East *is forthcoming from the Hoover Institution Press.*

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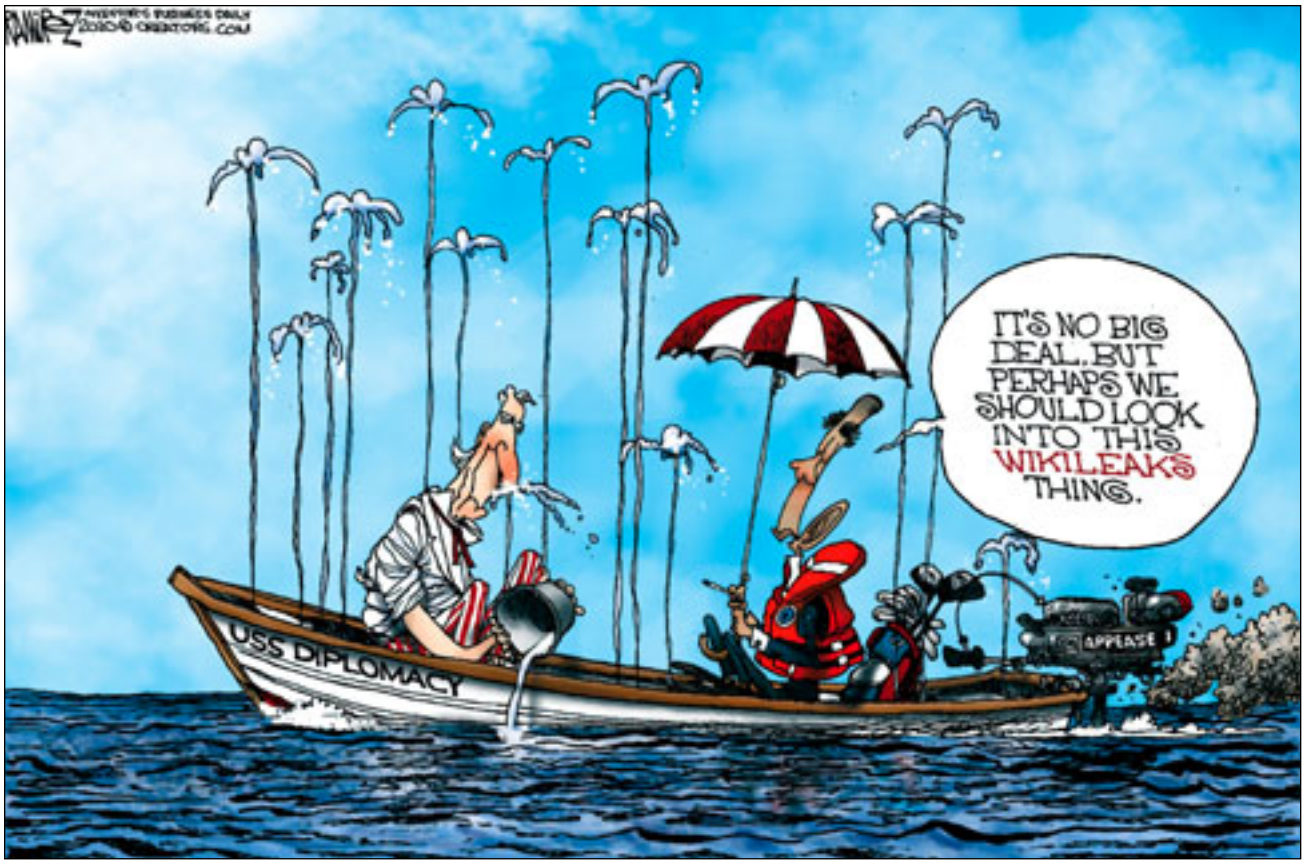
So it is worthwhile to review what others who've had dealings with revolutionary Iran have thought about their encounters. Limbert's interesting 2009 book *Negotiating with Iran* was written before the tumultuous pro-democracy Green Movement challenged Ali Khamenei's dictatorship that June, and before Limbert rejoined the State Department as point man on Iran. It is a sober yet optimistic work.

Back in 1979, Limbert was sympathetic to the Khomeini revolution (and WikiLeaks-released State Department cables about the shah's mind-numbing police state show why a thoughtful U.S. diplomat would have been deeply uncomfortable with the Pahlavi dynasty). In his recent book, he can't quite bring himself to see the struggle between the United States and the Islamic Republic as an ideological/religious battle. Looking back at Obama's failed outreach to Ali Khamenei, Limbert concludes that "diplomatic efforts . . . foundered on mutual suspicion, political ineptitude, misreading signals, bad timing, and the power of inertia. . . . Officials on both sides seemed unable to get beyond their classic responses." Nothing about God. Nothing about Satan. Nothing about the evolution of Shiite Islamic militant thought in the 20th century. Nothing about Khamenei's vision of incompatible civilizations.

I strongly suspect that Limbert was Obama's alter ego and Persian pen: The president's words were really his. Obama's use of the Persian poet Saadi—a Sufi poet of brotherly love and no favorite of the revolution—in his outreach to Khamenei reflected the cultural lens through which Limbert sees Iran. The president's studied use of the official appellation "The Islamic Republic of Iran" in his addresses to the supreme leader mirrored Limbert's belief that such polite symbolism could aid in conflict resolution. And Obama was in perfect sync with Limbert in describing the root cause of America's problems in the Middle East as "negative preconceptions."

The failure to perceive irreconcilable ideological differences between Americans and the still-faithful disciples of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is vividly on display in the reporting cable from the U.S. embassy in Iraq dated November 30, 2007. The cable summarizes a series of meetings in Baghdad where General David Petraeus and the American ambassador met and conversed with the British ambassador to Tehran. The meetings were called to prepare the Americans for the fourth round of the Iran-Iraq-United States trilateral discussions, to be held in Baghdad the following month.

According to Ambassador Adams, Iran had several goals, "both superficial and substantive." The Iranians wanted to "institutionalize talks with the US and keep open the possibility of broadening the agenda." The British ambassador predicted, per the State Department cable, that "the Iranians will seek to keep them going both to engender their prestige and to keep tabs on what the USG is thinking." Adams thought



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"the talks had triggered a useful internal debate [in Iran] in how to make the best use of the talks and their strategic interests." With nice English understatement, "Adams added that he believed there is a significant lobby in Iran against holding talks with the US." What we know now pretty clearly is that Khamenei hated these talks. Even while they were occurring, he gave the distinct impression that he held his nose when referring to the meetings.

The driving force behind the discussions was not Iranian curiosity about American intentions but Shiite Iraqi anxiety and anger at the Iranians. Although American and British observers of Iraq have a tendency to view Shiite Iraqis as pawns of the Iranians, the opposite is often closer to the truth. Iran got tied down in Iraq—its options complicated and limited by the fractious, increasingly anti-Persian sentiments of the Iraqi Shia, some of whom were being assassinated by Iranian-trained and Iranian-guided Iraqi hit teams (a point that WikiLeaks-released classified Pentagon documents make crystal clear). Iranian-backed assassinations were beginning to cause noticeable disquiet among Iran's clergy, many of whom are closely connected to the Iraqi clergy in the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala. The Iraqi Shia effectively dragged Ali Khamenei's representatives to these meetings with the Americans; the talks stopped precisely because the supreme leader opposed institutionalizing discussions and did not view them as enhancing Iranian prestige. The last thing in the world he wanted was to "broaden the agenda" between him and "Satan incarnate"—a phrase that Khamenei deployed against the United States after President Obama basically begged the supreme leader for unconditional talks.

Unlike Khamenei, Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad didn't mind the Iranian-American chitchat in Iraq. (And according to Ryan Crocker, the American ambassador there, "chitchat" would be a generous description of what transpired in Baghdad.) Ahmadinejad has regularly given the impression that he enjoys going *mano a mano* with the United States. Unlike Khamenei, who has a traditional cleric's distaste for physical contact with impure things and people (chiefly women and unbelievers), Ahmadinejad sees Iranian-Muslim superiority as best displayed up close and personal. The president relishes his trips to the United Nations, which becomes a stage for Ahmadinejad's personal passion play of the righteous against the wicked. The supreme leader would probably rather have his toenails pulled out than ascend the U.N. dais or speak to unbelievers at Columbia University.

Adams and Limbert both give a good idea of the Iranian love affair with conspiracy, how it melds inextricably with reality. "Iranians assume," the Baghdad cable tells us, "that everything [the Americans] do or say has meaning and has been carefully thought out and coordinated, both internally and with the UK; there are no accidents." Less emotionally invested in Iran than Limbert, the British ambassador is a bit clearer in how he describes Iranian malevolence. Per Adams, "Iran sees the US as a tough, determined adversary that can be manipulated and wounded." The State cable, which is full of Adams's sensible tactical advice about Iranian habits and manners, contains not a word about how religion enters into Khamenei's perceptions of the United States. With Adams and Limbert, God doesn't seem to be a participant in Iranian-American conversations.

The last thing Khamenei wanted was to 'broaden the agenda' between him and 'Satan incarnate'—a phrase that Khamenei deployed against the United States after Obama basically begged him for unconditional talks.

What's more striking is that God doesn't enter Bruce Laingen's ruminations either. For the chargé d'affaires during the most stressful time in Iranian-American relations, the embassy's problems lay more in Persian culture than in the explosion of the Iranian-Islamic identity. "In some instances," Laingen wrote shortly before the embassy takeover, "the difficulties we have encountered are a partial reflection on the effects of the Iranian revolution, but we believe the underlying cultural and psychological qualities that account for the nature of these difficulties are and will remain relatively constant." I suspect that Laingen would like to rewrite that sentence.

Laingen saw several pernicious cultural forces at work—"Persian egoism," the "incomprehension of causality," and the "Persian concepts of influence and obligation." Anyone who's ever been a case officer handling Iranian agents will instinctively grasp Laingen's discussion of "causality"—how time, cause, and effect are interconnected, which is why Westerners usually start conversations at "A" and work towards "Z." Iranians, even highly Westernized Iranians, can start at "P," work back to "D," skip erratically to "N," and then jump to "Y." Debriefing an Iranian—"decoding" is a more apt description—can take a great deal of patience and a very un-Western appreciation of contradictions. Laingen's cable is admirably free of political correctness (the idea was just germinating in universities in 1979) and is, as a practical guide for face-to-face discussions with revolutionary Iranians, rich. But again, it's impossible to overlook the lack of religious content in the chargé's reflections.

The ruminations of Laingen, Adams, and Limbert are all culture-heavy commentaries. They assume that culture and what we would describe as pragmatic political considerations override what revolutionary Iranians, like Islamic fundamentalists everywhere, call *akhlaq*, religious ethics. They also give little attention to how politics can rapidly warp culture—even age-old culture. The modern Middle East is the very sad story of ideological passion—socialism, communism, fascism, Arabism, nationalism, and Islamism—pulverizing traditional cul-

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ture, with all its eccentricities and customs that allowed for human decency and so much mirth. As Westerners ought to know from their own modern history, good people fueled with the wrong ideology can quickly become monsters. Ideology can permanently scar a culture and transform it.

The colorful, humanistic side of Iranian culture, like the importation and deep absorption of Western democratic ideas, is fighting hard against the Islamic Republic's modern and authoritarian religious ideology. But God's faithful soldiers—which is how Khamenei, Ahmadinejad, and their backers within the Revolutionary Guards see themselves—remain powerful. You cannot take God away from these men. You cannot define their fundamental concepts of good, evil, and justice without making reference to the obligations that every believer owes to the Almighty. You cannot talk about Iran's nuclear program without understanding it within a religious context. How many times have we heard NPR or American (especially Iranian-American) academics and journalists talk about the irretrievable marriage of the nuclear program with Iranian nationalism? Whether that is true or not, the secular disposition of the analysts is telling. Secularism has transformed *Western* culture—or, as Ahmadinejad and Khamenei would say, has permanently debased it.

When the Americans, Europeans, and Khamenei's representatives gather in Geneva on December 6, we should keep in mind what Limbert, Adams, and Laingen teach us about the revolutionary Iranian psyche and how Iranians act among themselves and with foreigners. But we should also keep in mind what's missing from these gentlemen's fine commentary. If the Obama administration and the Europeans actually understood the opposing side, they would realize the sanctions now on the books are not nearly enough to make Khamenei blink. Islamic history is littered with defeated religious militants. But they were *defeated*. They didn't arrive at a new understanding of their faith through diplomacy and negotiations. ♦

Deadly Gossip

The culture of leaking grows to ominous proportions. BY LEE SMITH

Many here in the United States have been quick to dismiss the significance of the State Department cables released by WikiLeaks as little more than foreign policy gossip. Unfortunately, this is not how it's playing in the rest of the world, particularly in the Middle East. In that conspiracy theory-rich region, nothing the Americans do is by accident.

For instance, the Iraq war and the subsequent sectarian fighting was seen in some precincts of the Levant as the consummation of a project to divide and conquer the Arabs at the behest of Israel—a plan allegedly laid out in a letter written by Henry Kissinger in 1976. Never mind that no such correspondence ever existed—just two weeks ago Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah cited the three-decade-old fictional memo to dishearten his Lebanese rivals in the pro-American camp.

With WikiLeaks, then, it's hardly surprising that these same U.S. adversaries have turned an intelligence dump into an opportunity for disinformation. According to one rumor consistent with Hezbollah's propaganda campaign, a soon-to-be-leaked diplomatic cable will show that senior American envoys have tried to scuttle the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. The message coming from Hezbollah and its allies is loud and clear: The Americans' deep plan is to betray their Arab allies, not protect them.

Hence, WikiLeaks mastermind Julian Assange and Bradley Manning, the soldier who downloaded the cables and shared them with Assange, have handed America's enemies in the Middle East another weapon in their war against U.S. citizens, interests, and allies.

If every American action in the region is seen as part of a carefully choreographed campaign, friendly Arab regimes must be wondering why Washington is looking to embarrass them by "leaking" these cables right now. Yemeni president Ali Saleh probably no longer thinks it's funny that he offered to take credit for U.S. air attacks on al Qaeda militants in his country. Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman must wish that he had chosen his words about Hamas a bit more carefully. Saudi King Abdullah likely would have found less provocative imagery than his description of the Iranians as snakes.

Presidents, kings, and intelligence chiefs of hard security regimes can protect themselves, but other U.S. allies are in a much more precarious position. For instance, Lebanese prime minister Saad Hariri might have avoided telling the Americans to bomb Iran had he known his counsel would be revealed during his trip to Tehran. Current and former U.S. allies among the Lebanese are particularly vulnerable since the Bush administration played an active role there, encouraging local actors to stand up for democracy. From the perspective of the Iranian-led resistance bloc, this amounted to taking sides against Hezbollah, Damascus, and Tehran, and siding with the United States and Israel. Some of these cables will substantiate that charge, and Washington has shown little inclination, or ability, to protect its own.

One cable reports that Lebanese defense minister Elias Murr explained how his country's armed forces would stay out of the way if Israel wanted to take a shot at Hezbollah. In another, acting commander of the Lebanese

Lee Smith is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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army Major General Shawki al-Masri asked for attack helicopters to confront Hezbollah.

The Murr and Masri cables were leaked to a pro-Hezbollah Beirut daily, one of the local papers that WikiLeaks has been feeding on the sidelines of its primary campaign in the *Guardian*, *El Pais*, *Le Monde*, and *Der Spiegel*. While the leaks coming from these major European papers are getting most of the attention, it is in these smaller, local markets around the world where U.S. interests are likely to be hit hardest, and where American allies, like Murr and Masri, are most vulnerable. Some of our allies will surely lose their lives thanks to the adolescent self-righteousness of Assange and Manning.

What may be worse for Washington than our regional allies' thinking the leaks were part of a clever, vicious intelligence operation, is the prospect that they will conclude it is not intentional, that rather, this massive dump is just the result of American incompetence. Our European friends will forgive us after they have had a laugh at our expense. But in the Middle East, our lack of seriousness and resolve, and our inability to stop a cyber-Chomsky from undermining our foreign policy, will entail a loss of prestige and honor. These abstractions may mean little to the newspaper editors who discount the importance of the leaks while plastering them across their front pages, but they are concepts for which others are prepared to kill and die.

Former U.S. government officials are divided over how long the damage will last. "All of the [governments] will say that WikiLeaks is not important," says Ambassador Eric Edelman, envoy to Turkey in 2003-05. "They will put it behind them for a simple reason that they would be loath to admit, which is that we are still the world's remaining superpower, and they will work with us." Individuals, though, says Edelman, will probably not soon forget. "It is hard to imagine any senior government official anywhere in the world, human rights activist, private citizen, military officer, academic, or anyone else who might be a well-informed source having any faith that a confidential discussion they have won't be showing up in the *New York Times* within a few months."

If there is any upside to what Edelman calls a dark day for American statesmanship, it's that the cables show Foreign Service officers for the most part to be honest, buoyant, and clear-eyed observers of the Middle East. It is peculiar then that rather than commend U.S. diplomats for doing their jobs, the president and his secretary of state have extended their apologies to world leaders, including Turkey's. After Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to "crush" the American diplomats who dared to raise critical issues, the administration was silent.

That American diplomats in the Middle East relay their findings back to Washington faithfully and accurately may come as a surprise to those who primarily think of the State Department as a pro-Arab government bureaucracy famous for its ambivalence toward Israel. But regardless of State's political inclinations, good accurate reports are Foggy Bottom's meat and potatoes, says Elliott Abrams, who worked at State during the Reagan administration. "One of the things you learn at the State Department is reporting," says Abrams. "It is absolutely essential, probably the single skill that is most rigorously taught there."

However, one former official in the George W. Bush White House who requested anonymity maintains that much of the State Department's reporting is considerably less accurate than what has been released to date. "We've only seen the tip of the iceberg of some 200,000 cables," he explains. Some are likely to show a different side of the Foreign Service, one that uses the information it controls to win Washington policy fights. "Journalists will elicit quotes from sources to get the story they want," says the former official. "And some Foreign Service officers do the same thing, with the difference being that with journalism there is a certain limit to how far you can play with reality. That problem is multiplied many times with classified documents."

The WikiLeaks episode then might best be understood in a broader context, encompassing the media as well as a foreign policy establishment in which leaking has become an accepted, even encouraged, method of arguing one's case. Leaking by the foreign policy bureaucracies to undermine Bush administration policy was epidemic over the course of his two terms. During that time, leaking to the national press became commonplace, and because so many had a stake in fighting Bush—from his own secretary of state to the *New York Times*—it offended the sensibilities of very few. Indeed, after Bush's reelection in 2004, W. Patrick Lang, a former Defense Intelligence Agency official said of the CIA, "Of course they were leaking. They told me about it at the time. They thought it was funny. They'd say things like, 'This last thing that came out, surely people will pay attention to that. They won't reelect this man.'"

The WikiLeaks dump is ultimately more than an escalation of this trend, however. The massive size and indiscriminateness of the cable dump bespeaks not a fight over a specific policy, but a shapeless outpouring of anti-American animus. It is no use trying to understand Assange or Manning's exact motives, just as attempts to interpret Osama bin Laden's precise goals on 9/11 seldom repay the effort. What they have done is an act of cyberterrorism that will aid those waging war against U.S. citizens, interests, and allies. If the Obama administration has failed to respond commensurately, it is only partly because the president and his attorney general are still trying to convince themselves, and the American public, that our wars should be left largely to the police and civilian trials. It is also because for too long now our press corps and policymakers have collaborated in a naïve and foolish game that, as we have seen, and will unfortunately continue to see, gets people killed, including American citizens. Our allies in the Middle East will only be the first to pay the price. ♦

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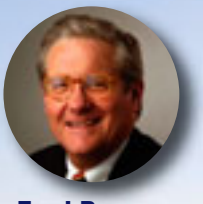

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Don't Link START

We need nuclear modernization whether the treaty is ratified or not. BY SPENCER ABRAHAM

Demolition of a uranium production facility at Fernald, near Cincinnati, in 2004

As the White House endeavors to secure Senate approval of the new START treaty, it is seeking to forge a grand bargain with Senator Jon Kyl: increased funding for the U.S. nuclear weapons enterprise—a long-standing priority of Kyl's—in exchange for ratification. While this might sound like routine Washington bargaining, it would create a linkage that could actually harm U.S. national security interests.

Defense Policy IN 2011

The simple fact is that, quite apart from START, the failure of administrations and Congresses to invest adequately in maintaining our nuclear stockpile has already brought us to a perilous point. In particular, the national weapons laboratories and other infrastructure needed to maintain the safety, reliability, and security of our stockpile and ensure U.S. technological leadership in this pivotal area have been allowed to atrophy.

As early as 2001, this problem was emerging. Most of our nuclear laboratories and production plants had been built during World War II or early in the Cold War. Buildings were deteriorating, and we were losing capabilities, such as the capacity to construct plutonium pits, the triggers for most of our weapons. Everything from R&D to critical skills retention to the pensions of the men and women employed in our nuclear weapons labs was being shortchanged.

During the George W. Bush administration, efforts were made to address these problems. Some progress resulted, but Congress provided less funding than required to get the job done. In its early days, the Obama administration paid little attention to the backlog of needs in the weapons enterprise. To the contrary, the focus was on reducing the stockpile and banking the savings.

Fortunately, Senator Kyl continued to press for modernization, and as a result of his perseverance, the administration ultimately conducted its own review of the situation. Its conclusion: The advocates of modernization were right, and more had to be done to maintain our nuclear capabilities. Unfortunately, some view these essential investments in our nuclear weapons enterprise as a "chit" to be provided only if START is ratified.

The Obama administration's decision to support increased investment in the maintenance of our nuclear weapons labs and stockpile is correct and long overdue. Yet it still falls short. For example, the sum proposed is only a third of that needed to replace the two largest Cold War era facilities. The administration's position, moreover, comes with no guarantee of congressional support. Still, it constitutes a move in the right direction.

But the fact that the administration has revised its policy for the better is in itself no reason for any senator to endorse START. While senators may judge that the treaty deserves support on its merits, it is misguided to suggest that support is warranted as a quid pro quo for the administration's belated decision to ramp up its investment in our nuclear defense complex. Neither Jon Kyl nor any other senator should cast a vote for START—or any other significant measure—because the president and his team have come to their senses on a matter as critical to our national security as the modernization of the weapons complex. The START treaty and beefed up funding for our nuclear enterprise are two separate issues that should remain distinct. ♦

AP / DAVID KOHL

Spencer Abraham, chairman and CEO of the Abraham Group, was secretary of energy from 2001 to 2005.

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Time to Split the Baby

A solution to the Air Force's tanker woes.

BY JOHN NOONAN

Few defense acquisition tales have been as sordid as that of the U.S. Air Force's new refueling tanker, the KC-X. The tanker acquisition program first popped up on the national radar screen in 2001, when Senator John McCain called into question a no-bid contract that would have leased modified Boeing 767s to the Air Force instead of purchasing a new tanker outright. An ensuing corruption scandal marred the leasing deal beyond recognition. In the years since, the issue has been punted by both the Pentagon and Congress to new administrations and new budgets, tangled up by defense contractors' waffling between new bids, no bids, and retracted bids, and unnecessarily delayed by elected officials' squabbling over jobs and pork.

Defense Policy IN 2011

The need for a new tanker aircraft is pressing. The backbone of the aerial refueler fleet, the KC-135, was initially fielded in the 1950s. Though heavy modifications have managed to keep the plane flying into its sixth decade of service, corrosion and age have inflated maintenance costs to troublesome levels. The tanker fleet was originally designed to support Strategic Air Command's storied bomber force, giving long range B-52s the legs to hit targets deep inside the Soviet Union. Since the end of the Cold War and the rise of America's new role as chief custodian of global stability, the refueler armada has been tasked with a much broader mission.

America projects military power through two key avenues—air and sea. Tankers provide a capability similar to that of aircraft carriers, in that they provide our fighters and bombers the range to penetrate enemy airspace and return. Refuelers allowed B-2 bombers to strike targets in the Middle East from their home base in Missouri and fighter aircraft to loiter indefinitely over hostile territory in Afghanistan. They transport troops and cargo as well as fuel, serving as some of the most versatile assets in the Pentagon's inventory.

So it is astonishing that it has taken Congress so long to replace a tool critical to America's far-reaching global responsibilities. Since the 2001 scandal, the fight to replace the aging tanker fleet has grown uglier. After the corruption investigation resulted in indictments for several senior company officials, Boeing reinvented itself, returning to the tanker fight in the mid-2000s with a snazzy new bid. By this time, an alliance of Northrop Grumman and the European Aeronautic Defense & Space Company (EADS) had submitted a bid of their own, ultimately upsetting the heavily favored Boeing to win the KC-X contract in 2008. Boeing protested through the Government Accounting Office, a political bar fight erupted, Northrop Grumman withdrew its bid, forcing EADS to go it alone, and two years later the Air Force is still without its long overdue replacement tanker.

Both proposed aircraft, the KC-30 built on an Airbus model by Northrop-EADS and the KC-767 constructed by Boeing, have a fair claim to the contract. The KC-30 is a larger jet and can carry 20 percent more fuel, 20 percent more passengers, and 30 percent more cargo than its Boeing counterpart. In short, it's a more capable aircraft. Further, the Boeing 767 is at the end of its service life. That makes it a somewhat dubious replacement given that the KC-X is intended to fly for the next 40 years.

But the Boeing plane has a strong appeal to those in Congress who are interested in both creating jobs and saving money. Their economic argument is powerful. Innovations in refueling technology allow for the 767 to transfer gas more efficiently, and—being the smaller of the two planes—it consumes less fuel than the EADS bird. Smaller size, says Boeing, is an advantage in that it allows more planes to cram into the crowded flight lines on U.S. bases in Asia. And independent studies have found that the KC-767 would be 20 to 25 percent cheaper to own and operate than the Airbus model. Further, Boeing is an American company and the creator of the KC-135, which has proven to be a fantastic aircraft that has lasted far beyond initial projections. Selection of Boeing's model means that the tanker fleet's maintenance and logistical jobs would stay in the States instead of being exported to France. These dueling claims, coupled with an uneven developmental history, have turned the KC-X debate into the Gordian Knot of the defense acquisition world.

Fortunately, there is a way to cut that knot. The Air Force tanker force structure is currently an 80/20 split between "big and little" tankers—80 percent little (the KC-135) and 20 percent big (the KC-10 Extender). This strategy was laid out in a time when the KC-10 was still relatively new. Now that jet is creeping up on its fourth decade of service and is beginning to show its age.

With Airbus and Boeing producing capable aircraft with unique advantages, Congress could split the baby with a 50/50 buy from Airbus and Boeing, replacing *both* the KC-10 and the KC-135. It should also be noted that the Air Force rejected a mixed-

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fleet replacement for the KC-135 in 2007, claiming that it would unnecessarily inflate costs. But that math is fuzzy and didn't factor in replacing the KC-10 as well. With a budget to buy 15 airframes a year, splitting the fleet would force strong competition between Boeing and Airbus to control construction and sustainment costs.

One fact that has emerged from the gnarly world of defense acquisition is that competition is a proven cost-control mechanism. The so-called F-16 "engine wars" during the 1980s ended up saving the Pentagon billions, as did comparable fights over cruise missile and Navy systems contracts. As the KC-X program is projected to last 40 years, allowing for either EADS or Boeing to have a monopoly on logistics, maintenance, and refurbishment, contracts could significantly inflate both the ownership and operation price tag.

Further, this approach makes the most sense from a capabilities standpoint. In 2008, the entire fleet of C-model F-15s was grounded owing to a structural flaw. As a result, Canada's limited inventory of CF-18 interceptors had to take over a significant portion of the North American air defense mission. A similar flaw in the new tanker, should we hold ourselves to a single model, could be catastrophic. F-15Cs have a sole mission: air interdiction. The KC-X will have many. The effects of a grounding would be felt throughout the entire military, and it would instantly reduce the combat capability of the rest of the Air Force fleet, hamper our capacity to transport men and materials to overseas stations, and also restrict the range of Navy and Marine aircraft that rely on Air Force refuelers. Pragmatic redundancy in the military world is never a bad thing; indeed, it is one of the guiding principles of modern warfare.

A hybrid fleet of Airbus and Boeing planes provides the best solution to a tough problem.

Given the deep complexities of the KC-X fight, there is no silver bullet here. But both Congress and the Pentagon should be careful to keep the interests of our fighting men and women at the forefront of this debate. A hybrid fleet of Airbus and Boeing planes provides the best solution to a tough problem, both from a cost perspective and—more important—from a capabilities standpoint.

In the end, the real enemy is further dallying. The Air Force needed this jet a decade ago; the longer we wait, the more the overall buy will cost. Crafting a strong, annual competition between Boeing and EADS, replacing both the KC-135 and the KC-10, and swiftly standing up squadrons of new tankers should be a top priority of the new Congress. ♦

Online Shopping Requires Vigilance

By Thomas J. Donohue
President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

On November 29, federal officials announced the seizure of 82 websites dedicated to selling counterfeit goods and/or pirating copyrighted materials. By cracking down on these illegal operations, law enforcement is leading the fight against the online theft of intellectual property (IP), which harms consumers and costs American jobs.

Many of the sites that were shut down offered products aimed at holiday shoppers—including luxury goods, jewelry, and DVDs. The counterfeit products sold on these websites don't have to comply with government or industry standards, are frequently of poor quality, and can pose serious health or safety risks to unwary consumers.

Online counterfeiting and piracy don't just put consumers in danger—they also eliminate jobs and weaken our economy. According to the OECD, the global impact of counterfeiting and piracy—including online theft—was estimated to be as high as $250 billion in 2007. As this threat continues to grow, more American jobs—and a key segment of the U.S. economy—will be at risk. IP-intensive industries employ 18 million Americans and account for about 60% of U.S. exports.

While the digital raids conducted by law enforcement are helpful, more must be done to shut down these criminal networks. That's why the U.S. Chamber is calling for the passage of the Combating Online Infringement and Counterfeits Act, introduced by Sens. Pat Leahy (D-VT) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT). This bill would provide enhanced legal tools to take rogue websites offline, help prevent their reemergence, and cut them off from the supportive services and revenue streams they need to survive.

The Chamber, however, is not leaving it to government alone to solve this issue. Through its Global Intellectual Property Center (GIPC), the Chamber is leading a worldwide effort to educate consumers, businesses, and governments about the value of IP rights. The GIPC works closely with Congress, the administration, and other stakeholders to further a pro-IP agenda. Specifically, the GIPC is working to advance legislation to improve counterfeiting and piracy enforcement, strengthen the protection and enforcement of IP rights in the United States and abroad, fight online counterfeiting and digital theft, and promote and defend a robust international system of IP rights and norms.

In addition, the Chamber and the GIPC are working to ensure that the newly created White House office of the U.S. Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator has sufficient staff, resources, and authority to strengthen U.S. government anti-counterfeiting and piracy enforcement efforts.

IP theft is a serious issue and deserves our attention not just during the holiday season but throughout the year. To learn more, visit www.theglobalipcenter.com.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Comment at www.chamberpost.com.

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The GOP's California Blues

What explains the 'reverse tsunami?'

BY FRED BARNES

Palo Alto

The election in California didn't turn out as poorly as you might think. An $18 car fee, the proceeds going to spruce up parks, was voted down. So was an attempt to repeal a string of tax breaks for business. Limits on user fees, often described as "hidden taxes," were approved. And legalization of marijuana was soundly defeated.

These were sensible, conservative results that in most states would have been part of a sweeping Republican victory. But not in California. Republican candidates here lost every race for statewide office in the November 2 election. In a year when Republicans picked up 63 House seats nationally, they failed to capture a single Democratic seat in the Golden State. They lost a seat in the state assembly, where they were already badly outnumbered.

"A sort of reverse tsunami took effect," says Republican consultant Ken Khachigian. California voters "know who we are, and they don't like us," Duf Sundheim told the Associated Press. Sundheim was Republican party chairman in California from 2003 to 2006.

"The Republican party brand is a major liability in California," Sundheim wrote in a postelection white paper. Khachigian echoes this view: "The great deadly sin of this campaign was having an 'R' by your name on the ballot."

Sundheim cites the example of Steve Cooley, the popular district attorney of Los Angeles County who was the Republican candidate for state attorney general. He led his Democratic opponent, Kamala Harris, a left-wing San Francisco lawyer, in every preelection poll. In Cooley's own polling, he was 8 percentage points ahead on the eve of the election. He lost narrowly.

Cooley had won L.A. County three times in local contests. Yet he lost the county to Harris by double-digits. Sundheim said Democratic professionals explained Cooley's defeat to him quite simply. Until November 2, most voters didn't know Cooley was a Republican.

How to explain Steve Cooley's defeat? Until November 2, most voters didn't know he was a Republican.

While gaining in most states, Republicans have lost ground in California since the last midterm election in 2006. The Democratic advantage in party registration was 42-34 percent four years ago. Now it's 44-31 percent. Republicans are regarded unfavorably by nearly a 2-1 margin, according to Sundheim.

The most surprising aspect of their defeat was the surge in Hispanic turnout. Hispanics are 21 percent of registered voters but were 22 percent of the electorate this year. "That exceeded any historical number we've ever seen," Khachigian says. Hispanics voted overwhelmingly for Democratic candidates.

Bill Whalen, a political analyst at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, says Republican gubernatorial candidate Meg Whitman was initially picking up Hispanic support with a flood of ads in the Hispanic media. A month before the election, she was accused of mistreating her Hispanic housekeeper, Nicky Diaz, whom she had fired a year earlier after learning Diaz was in the country illegally. Democrats spent millions to play up Diaz's allegations on Spanish-language television.

"To win in California, a general rule (which will increase over time) is that the [Republican] candidate needs to obtain at least 35 percent of the Latino vote," Sundheim wrote in his analysis. "Meg was there in September . . . but after the housekeeper issue the vote shifted." She got 31 percent, the Republican Senate candidate, Carly Fiorina, 28 percent.

For California Republicans, the scenario for victory statewide looks like a fishhook. It starts with winning in Sacramento and, moving southward, in the Central Valley. It swoops southeast, then north, with strong wins in San Diego and Orange County, then up the Pacific coast with victories in Los Angeles County and in Ventura County north of L.A.

In 2010, the fishhook didn't materialize. Republicans did poorly in Sacramento, their vote in San Diego and Orange County was weak, and they were crushed by a massive Democratic turnout in L.A. Democrats outspent Republicans by 3-1 or 4-1 on get-out-the-vote efforts. "Most of that appears to have been spent in Los Angeles," Sundheim notes. One result: The African-American vote is estimated to have nearly doubled from its normal turnout in a midterm election.

Fiorina, the former CEO of Hewlett-Packard, was an excellent retail candidate who believed until late on Election Night that she had a chance of winning. "I was proud of the campaign we ran," she told me. "In the end, the Democratic turnout swamped us." She lost to Senator Barbara Boxer, 52-42 percent. In the governor's race, Whitman was defeated by Jerry Brown, 54-41 percent.

What must Republicans do to recover in California? A lot. Their bench of potential candidates for statewide office is thin. California,

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Sundheim says, "is the seventh most liberal state in the country." That doesn't help. The position of many Republicans on immigration alienates Hispanics. California is a blue state in which Democrats run brutal, lavishly financed, and effective campaigns. And President Obama is still more popular than not here.

Despite all that, Republicans have won in recent memory. In 2003, Arnold Schwarzenegger was elected governor in a recall election and reelected in 2006. Since there was no primary, a destructive fight between conservatives and moderates was avoided. Primaries drain funds. Fiorina emerged from the Senate primary with less than $1 million. Boxer, with $11 million, immediately began attacking Fiorina for sending 30,000 jobs overseas when she ran HP. Fiorina, short on money, was late in responding.

Can a conservative win in California? The answer is yes, but only a conservative like Ronald Reagan with crossover appeal. Fiorina was unabashedly pro-life, pro-offshore oil drilling, pro-gun, and pro-state's rights. Yet she got more votes than Whitman, who ran to the center.

"I asked a number of professionals whether Carly was too far to the right to win in California," Sundheim said. "The consensus was that Boxer was so far to the left, that this was *a* case, if not *the* case, where a Carly conservative could win." But not in 2010, it turned out.

It's the initiatives that provide a ray of hope for Republicans and conservatives. Liberal initiatives that passed didn't rely on liberal arguments. Abolishing the requirement for a two-thirds majority in the legislature to enact a budget was promoted by attacking the political class in Sacramento, a Tea Party theme. The bid to suspend the Global Warming Act was defeated by demonizing Texas oil interests who oppose reductions in greenhouse gases. And the co-chair of the campaign to keep the act alive was none other than George P. Shultz, Ronald Reagan's secretary of state and, at age 90, a figure of eminence among California Republicans. ♦

Good News, for a Change

In Taliban country, a precarious success.

BY ANN MARLOWE

FOB Smart, Zabul PRT, Qalat, Zabul Province

We squeeze into the cramped rear seat of a green Ford Ranger Afghan National Police truck. Neither Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Andy Veres—the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) commander—nor the State Department's James Dayringer nor I wear the body armor and helmet that used to be mandatory for any trip outside the wire of American bases here. Yet we are about to drive 30 miles from the PRT in downtown Qalat to remote Arghandab District in an unarmored car.

On my previous visits to Zabul in November 2009 and April 2010, we would have had to go with a company of American maneuver troops in Humvees. This is Afghanistan's second-poorest province, where the Taliban's roots are deep. And while today's trip takes three hours each way, a year ago it might have taken days, depending on how many IEDs were discovered and how many exploded.

In November 2009, there were weekly suicide attacks in Zabul's biggest town, Shajoy (population 40,000). There hasn't been one since May. The mobile phone towers used to be shut down by Taliban decree from sunset to sunrise; now they're open.

The point of our trip is practical: to show Afghans that the road has been cleared of Taliban and is open for business. Veres—a tall, skinny recreational mountaineer with 65 marathons and ultramarathons under his belt—counts every commercial vehicle we pass along the way up to Arghandab. "Maybe there were 12 cars today. But as people learn the road is open, this will give them the opportunity to take their crops to market in Qalat." There are now about 50 miles of paved road in Zabul besides the national ringroad, Highway One; there were none in 2007.

Veres's remark echoes the results of a recent survey of 1,000 southern Afghan men by ICOS. They cited the main contribution of foreigners to Afghanistan as roads (74 percent), schools (53 percent), jobs (21 percent), and elections (9 percent), while only 1 percent said "removing the Taliban."

The 60 or so Pashtun elders we meet in Arghandab are, according to the local Afghan National Army commander, all illiterate. The blanket and shawl distribution funded by the Americans is a big deal; the local bazaar has only two shops, one a butcher shop without any meat.

The struggle for places like Arghandab isn't easy. But Zabul seems to be on an upward path. One reason is the growing competence of the Afghan National Army here. The notoriously intractable police are also coming along.

Imaginative programs have been pushed through by a series of good American commanders. A self-defense initiative by former Zabul commander Lieutenant Colonel David Oclander rewards Shajoy men who sign up to police the bazaar with $1,200 bonuses to start a business or join the security forces permanently. Veres—who also served as PRT commander here from June 2009 to March 2010—started a program that places Zabul high school graduates in provincial ministries on internships to help the under-edu-

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cated directors do their jobs better. He's part of the Afghan Hands program that aims at creating area experts in our military.

Another factor is the near-doubling of foreign troop strength in Zabul over the last 12 months. In June, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment under Colonel James R. Blackburn arrived in Zabul, joining two Romanian battalions. While the Romanians train the Afghan National Army and protect Highway One, the Stryker battalion under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Omar Jones is responsible for the more dangerous outlying areas.

The security has been won at the cost of many lives. Since June, Jones has lost 3 of his 850, and 7 other American Special Forces were killed, along with 2 Romanian soldiers. The loss among the Afghan police and army here is high: 22 dead since June. Since then, between 24 and 40 IEDs have gone off every month.

The next day, I trail Veres and State Department representative Jesse Alvarado—in his second year here—as they spend the day with Shahr-e-Safa district governor Shadi Khan Nouri. A Kandahari with a ninth-grade education, Nouri owes his position to his long relationship with President Karzai. His three advisers, paid the locally munificent sum of $500 a month each by the U.S. government, do the job he isn't qualified to do: paperwork, email, project assessment.

A real villain, Mohammad Wazir, was evicted from one district for heroin-running after enormous effort by Oclander—only to be reassigned by Karzai to a different district.

Why not just replace Nouri? Politically impossible: District governors are presidential appointees. A real villain, Mohammad Wazir, was evicted from one district for heroin-running and general evildoing after enormous effort by Oclander—only to be reassigned by Karzai to a different district. The tribal leaders there recently protested that they would drag him naked through the street if he dared return. Major Derrick Hernandez, who served under Oclander in Zabul, commented, "Just imagine how far along we would be if the people actually voted for their district and provincial leaders!" Commander Veres, on the other hand, cautions that Afghan voting is a work in progress, and elected district governors might not be any more capable, though they might better serve their local tribes.

And so it goes, in a struggle for governance, the rule of law, and civil society that can assume horrific or comic dimensions. As we walk with Nouri through the pitiful Shahr-e-Safa bazaar, we pass under the American-funded solar street lights, stripped of their solar panels by locals oblivious to the public good. "I won't be in a hurry to replace these," Veres says. ♦

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The Gates Legacy

The Pentagon is not ready for the 21st century. But it's not too late to change course.

By Jim Talent

No one questions the contributions to national security of Defense Secretary Robert Gates or his skill at getting his way within the Department of Defense and with Congress. Gates is intelligent, strong-willed, and well-schooled in the ways of Washington. Early in his tenure, he put those talents to good use in implementing the "surge" and reestablishing confidence in our Iraq policy. Gates has concentrated since then on Afghanistan, and to good effect. Though President Obama made a huge mistake in imposing a timetable there, his decisions probably would have been worse without the influence of his defense secretary.

Yet there is real concern in Washington over Gates's leadership on other issues. It is understandable that he focused his efforts on Afghanistan and Iraq; defense secretaries have to pay attention to the wolf closest to the sled. But Gates is running the Pentagon at a time when other risks facing the United States have been growing while American power relative to those risks has been declining. A review of Gates's record on issues other than Afghanistan and Iraq shows he has made some key mistakes that have worsened the trend. But he still has time before he leaves the Pentagon sometime next year to set the stage for a renewal of American power and a subsequent increase in the margin of safety for the United States.

Silence During the 'Stimulus' Debate

For two years, Secretary Gates has warned that a "resource-constrained environment" requires "hard choices." On that basis, he has cancelled or sought to cancel dozens of major defense programs, including the F-22 fifth-generation fighter, the C-17 cargo aircraft, the VH-71 helicopter, the Air Force's combat search and rescue helicopter, and Army combat vehicles. Yet in early 2009, Congress passed a whopping $787 billion "stimulus" bill that contained not a dime to modernize and buy equipment for the military. The record is devoid of evidence that Gates fought for the needs of the military as Congress considered the bill. In fact, many in the Pentagon privately attest that Gates stifled his department's attempts to seek a share of the stimulus money.

The military is undeniably in a modernization crisis. The Navy has fewer ships than at any time since 1916, the Air Force hasn't been this small since Pearl Harbor, and the average age of the Air Force inventory is 25 years old. The Army needs to recapitalize equipment lost in Iraq and Afghanistan, and will need to replace most of its tracked vehicles over the next decade.

Appropriately, Gates has been vocal about his goal to reduce wasteful spending to save money for needed programs. But after nearly four years as defense secretary, spanning the Bush and Obama administrations, he has failed to make progress in solving the Pentagon's major management issues. Growing military health care costs continue to eat up money desperately needed for modernization; Gates has made little effort and had no success at controlling those expenses. He complains about the spiraling cost of shipbuilding but has yet to find a solution.

Nor has Gates solved ongoing issues with the F-35, the Joint Strike Fighter developed for the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. He believes he can use the F-35 as a substitute for the Air Force's F-22 fighter that he killed, and for the Navy's F/A-18 E/F Super Hornet, whose production he wants to end. Whatever the merits of that decision, it means that virtually the entire strike fighter capability of the U.S. military depends on the F-35.

However, the F-35 program continues to be behind schedule and increasingly over budget; the Pentagon announced last year that the cost has grown by roughly $100 billion since 2002, much higher than original estimates. Gates has made a great deal depend on a deeply troubled program that his department can't seem to fix.

There is no way to rationalize away these trends. They spell disaster for the American military. But the trends could

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have been reversed for perhaps a third of the stimulus money, spent judiciously over the next 5 to 10 years and coupled with real acquisition reform.

Moreover, funding for the military would have been entirely consistent with the logic of the stimulus bill, which was to create jobs through government spending. Gates's unwillingness to advocate using stimulus money to modernize the military may be remembered as one of the most consequential mistakes ever made by a secretary of defense. He can still recover, at least partly. By most estimates, there are up to several hundred billions of stimulus money still unspent. Understandably, House Republicans want to reclaim that money for deficit reduction. The administration will oppose that effort. Gates could propose as a compromise that a portion of the funding be used over the next two to three years to support basic procurement needs, like "resetting" Army and Marine Corps equipment and buying more F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. After that period, it is reasonable to hope that the cost of Afghanistan operations will begin to come down. Part of the money currently spent there could be recaptured for modernization, which would allow room for the military to recapitalize while the defense budget still contributes to deficit reduction.

In any event, Gates should stop using "resource constraints" as an excuse for cutting defense programs. Given the orgy of social spending by the Obama administration, he is only contributing to a level of disingenuousness unusual even for Washington.

Covering for the Missile Defense Fiasco

In September 2009, the Obama administration suddenly cancelled America's commitment to place missile interceptors in the Czech Republic and Poland. This was clearly an attempt to appease the Russians. Ever since—and in particular, after it was clear the United States got nothing from the Russians in return for such a gigantic concession—the administration has attempted to justify its betrayal of the Czechs and Poles on military grounds. The administration has claimed that a sea-based alternative (which it hurriedly is attempting to develop) is superior to land-based interceptors. Gates has allowed his credibility and that of the Defense Department to be used to promote this rationalization.

Gates contends that the long-range ICBM threat from Iran has slowed while U.S. capacity to defend against short- and mid-range missiles has developed faster than anticipated. Therefore, he argues, it was safe to abandon our arrangement with Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Yet the Pentagon repeatedly has said Iran is in rapid pursuit of long-range capability and, with foreign assistance, will be able to develop and test a missile capable of reaching U.S. shores by 2015. The interceptors in Eastern Europe would have been capable of shooting down such a missile. The administration's sea-based plan, which Gates endorsed, will not have that capability until around 2020, if the plan ever comes on line.

To this point, the administration hasn't been able to answer the questions Congress has asked about the costs or timetable for deployment of the sea-based alternative—not to mention the ability of the surface fleet to add yet another mission to a stretched force without getting more ships and other resources.

In short, the Polish and Czech missile interceptors were not a redundant capability. That's why the Bush administration, with Gates's support, pursued them so strongly. In any event, if there is one place where the United States needs redundancy, it is in the ability to defeat—and so deter—a nuclear attack. If the Obama administration really had been concerned about missile defense in Europe, it would have augmented rather than replaced the land-based interceptors.

Gates has failed to stand up for missile defense in other respects. With his approval, the administration reduced the overall budget for the missile shield last year by $1.6 billion, or 15 percent. Specifically, the administration:

- scaled back the planned number of ground-based "midcourse" interceptors in Alaska and California from 44 to 30;
- terminated the Multiple Kill Vehicle program for defeating an enemy's countermeasures;
- deferred purchase of a second Airborne Laser aircraft;
- killed the Kinetic Energy Interceptor program for intercepting ballistic missiles in the boost phase; and
- purged funds for the space "test bed" for missile defense.

There is a reason why North Korea has acquired nuclear weapons and Iran is seeking to do so. Nuclear weapons empower rogue regimes to use aggressive tactics in accomplishing their regional ambitions. That leads to ongoing conflict and the prospect of escalation into major confrontations. A fully deployed missile shield would neuter that threat and reduce the danger that the nuclear cascade will spread to other countries.

Under the circumstances, the missile defense shield may be the single most important program in the Pentagon budget. Secretary Gates should strongly and publicly support full funding and accelerated deployment of the system.

Silence on China

America's secretary of defense has two main jobs. As a senior official in the chain of command, the defense secretary supports military commanders in executing the missions of the nation. Equally important, he must plan and shape the force of the future. And since it takes a

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long time to develop and deploy new equipment, the Pentagon's planning horizon is 20 years down the road.

Gates conflates the two responsibilities, to the detriment in particular of our naval and air services. He often refers to the need to "rebalance the force" to better fight the wars of today. If he means only that the services should use current assets to win the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, then the statement is unremarkable.

But that isn't all that Gates means. He uses the current counterinsurgency missions as an excuse for not sustaining programs that are necessary to ensure the United States will be able to contain Russia, Iran, and especially the growing power of China.

One example is Gates's treatment of the Navy. Its size cut in half since the Reagan years, the Navy at 288 ships is smaller today than at any time since 1916. And it is still shrinking: At the current rate of shipbuilding, the Navy will be reduced to between 210 and 240 ships. No knowledgeable person believes a Navy that size can perform its global missions.

The latest official estimate, by the chief of naval operations in 2006, held that a 313-ship Navy was the minimum necessary for American security. The current chief has endorsed that number. In a speech before the Navy League earlier this year, however, Gates dismissed the idea that the Navy is too weak. He's since announced that he would not increase the shipbuilding budget and in fact would cut more programs. He already has ended purchases of the next-generation DDG-1000 destroyers; extended production of the next carrier from four years to five; killed the MPF-A large-deck aviation ship and mobile landing platform; and delayed indefinitely the next-generation cruiser, CG(X).

In his speech, Gates dismissed concerns by noting that the world's other navies, taken as a whole, have shrunk even more. But that is true largely because America's major European allies have reduced their naval capabilities since the end of the Cold War.

The Chinese, however, aren't shrinking their navy. Within about five years, their fleet of modern submarines will nearly equal ours. China also is building its first aircraft carrier and has announced plans to build a new class of destroyers. These are two clear signals China seeks the ability not only to hold the U.S. Navy at bay in the Western Pacific, but to project power around the world.

Time to Speak Plainly

For political and practical reasons, Gates largely has escaped criticism during his tenure as defense secretary. Democrats recognize that his prestige is necessary to prop up Obama's national security credentials. Republicans fear that if Gates is weakened, the administration's policies may get worse. And to be fair, many of Gates's questionable actions may have been maneuvers to maintain credibility with the president so that Gates could have more impact on issues, such as Afghanistan, that he rightly cares most about.

But there is a time to maneuver and a time for plain speaking. The time for Gates to speak plainly has come.

At the end of 2009, Congress created an independent panel to critique the Quadrennial Defense Review that the Pentagon issued in February of 2010. That panel was chaired by former secretary of defense William Perry, a Democrat, and former national security adviser Stephen Hadley, a Republican. Its members came from across the political spectrum. Most were appointed by Gates himself.

The independent panel issued its unanimous report on July 29. The panel recognized Gates's dedication to the missions in Afghanistan and Iraq; otherwise its report only can be described as a polite but clear rebuke of his leadership.

The panel discussed the threats facing America, dismissed the Defense Department's strategic plans as largely irrelevant to those threats, and comprehensively documented the growing gap between the actual strength of the military and the level of capability needed to protect America's enduring national interests.

The panel sounds an extraordinary warning in the introduction to its report:

> The issues raised in the body of this report are sufficiently serious that we believe an explicit warning is appropriate. The aging of the inventories and equipment used by the services, the decline in the size of the Navy, escalating personnel entitlements, overhead and procurement costs, and the growing stress on the force means that a train wreck is coming in the areas of personnel, acquisition, and force structure.

Gates is nearing the end of his service as head of the Pentagon. The fewer battles he has left to fight, the less concerned he need be about political consequences. He still has the time to say that, unless Congress adds substantial funding to modernize the military and fully supports changes necessary to reform the Pentagon, no responsible secretary of defense can continue to guarantee American security within an acceptable margin of risk.

Such a statement by Gates would definitely not be business as usual in Washington. It would make him unpopular in the White House and with many in Congress. But it would end, at long last, the tortured rationalizations by which the Joint Chiefs try to reconcile the eroding position of their services with the decisions of their political masters. It would pave the way for an honest debate about the nature of the post-Cold War world and the sacrifices necessary to protect American security in the 21st century. It would be a huge service to whoever succeeds Bob Gates at the Pentagon. And in the most fundamental sense, he'd be doing his job. ♦

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Hugh Trevor-Roper marries Alexandra Howard-Johnston, 1954

KEYSTONE / HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

History Man

The adventures of Hugh Trevor-Roper

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

As a young man who felt he needed to read everything, I read Hugh Trevor-Roper's demolition of Arnold Toynbee's ten-volume *Study of History*, in a 1957 essay in *Encounter* titled "Arnold Toynbee's *Millennium*," with a feeling of immense relief and gratitude, knowing that I should never have to slog my way through those turgid books. With a tweezer and a howitzer, Trevor-Roper dissected and blew apart Toynbee's work, leaving it in greater desolation than Carthage after the Second Punic War. Trevor-Roper called Toynbee "the Messiah" of his own concocted "religion of Mish-Mash." Of Toynbee, then a much revered figure, he wrote: "In spite of its Hellenic training, his mind is fundamentally anti-rational and illiberal. Everything which suggests the freedom of the human reason, the human spirit, is odious to him."

Hugh Trevor-Roper
The Biography
by Adam Sisman
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 648 pp., £25

If Trevor-Roper had done to you or me what he had done to Arnold Toynbee, we should have been left with two choices only: the witness protection program or the razor over the wrists.

I discovered that Trevor-Roper had earlier savaged the work of a younger historian named Lawrence Stone, who had written on the decline of the feudal aristocracy making way for the English revolution of the 17th century. Later, also in *Encounter*, he would do similar jobs—shock and awe, no prisoners taken, with a good salting of the earth before departing—on A.J.P. Taylor's *Origins of the Second World War* and E.H. Carr's *What Is History?* He was the polemicist of the age, Trevor-Roper. But what else was he?

Hugh Trevor-Roper, we learn from Adam Sisman's excellent biography, may have suffered, as he himself said of Lord Macaulay, from "instantaneous success." As a boy he shone under the rigors of England's examination system and waltzed into the better schools: first Charterhouse, then Christ Church,

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Oxford's most aristocratic college. He might have been among that once endless chain of brightest young men who came down from Oxford—usually, let it be said, to fail—except that he never came down, but stayed on for what all assumed would be a smoothly successful scholarly career.

At 26, Trevor-Roper published a strongly anticlerical book on Archbishop Laud, the archbishop of Canterbury in the reign of Charles I, that everyone agreed was impressive in its learning and penetration for a man so young. Brilliant was the word most frequently used to describe it, and brilliant the epithet most often attached to Trevor-Roper. He possessed a highly polished English prose style; was socially part of an Oxford elite inner circle that included Gilbert Ryle, A.J. Ayer, Isaiah Berlin, and Maurice Bowra; and at the relatively early age of 43 he was appointed Regius Professor of History at Oxford.

Yet a slight tinge of disappointment clung to Trevor-Roper's career. He hadn't, the feeling was, got the most out of himself. In a splendid essay on Jacob Burkhardt, the great Swiss historian, Trevor-Roper set out the definition of a mastermind historian. He must be professionally competent yet more than competent merely; "He must be a general historian, and something of a philosopher." He must also show in his work a feeling for general history, and with an understanding that one age stands for itself alone, but every age is also "part of a continuum, is relevant to the past." His philosophy as a historian "must survive the criticism of later generations and be found illuminating even in a new and radically different age." By these criteria Trevor-Roper qualifies on all grounds but one: He seems to have neglected to get round to writing an actual history.

If Adam Sisman's lengthy biography has a purpose, other than fascination with its complex subject *per se*, it is to explain why this immensely talented man did not write the great book everyone expected from him. Trevor-Roper scarcely wanted for ambition. His hero was Edward Gibbon; more than once he stated his wish to produce a work that could be mentioned in the same breath with *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. His prose, *mutatis mutandis*, was modeled on Gibbon's, and one of the pleasures of reading Trevor-Roper is coming upon him fairly regularly striking off Gibbonian sentences, those lengthy, anaconda-like contrivances that slither down the page with a comical ironic bite at the tail.

Hugh Trevor-Roper was born in 1914, in Northumberland, near the border of Scotland, to a physician father who had, as Sisman writes, "contracted out of fatherhood," and a coldly snobbish mother interested chiefly in the social climb. Sisman's verdict is that Trevor-Roper's "childhood had been a form of prison," not an entirely exceptional English story. Not much love in the home, if it doesn't break one down as a result of it, can build strong character. In ways not easily calibrated, not much love in the home helped build the British Empire.

Life opened up to young Hugh Trevor-Roper in the classroom. He did (no avoiding the word) brilliantly at Charterhouse, his public school, and at Christ Church he earned Firsts. His only recorded youthful setback was that he did not win a fellowship to All Souls College. He had also acquired a reputation for flippancy. In one of the papers he wrote for the All Souls fellowship, he referred to Rousseau's *Confessions* as "a lucid journal of a life so utterly degraded that it has been a bestseller in France ever since."

If Trevor-Roper's home life was bleak and devoid of pleasure, he did his best to make up for it during his years as an undergraduate, and later as a tutor, where he lived the life of a Bertie Wooster but with brains added: drinking, gourmandizing, driving fast cars, roistering generally. He failed to enter the skirt chase, and his biographer suggests that the youthful Trevor-Roper was not certain of his sexuality, though there is no talk in Sisman's pages of homosexual dalliances, always a vivid option at the Oxbridge of that day.

Arrogance, intellectual division, soon became part of his *modus operandi*. But it was arrogance with a comic twist. After being interviewed by the Merton College electors for a junior research fellowship, he remarked: "I hope I impressed them more than they impressed me." He entered in a disputatious way into fields not his own; as a young man, he presented a paper before senior classicists at Oxford arguing that *Prometheus Unbound* was wrongly attributed to Aeschylus. "I am often astonished by the depth and extent of my learning," he wrote in one of his wartime notebooks. Lest he become overdeveloped intellectually, better (he decided) to "devote more time to beagling, foxhunting, drinking, fishing, shooting, talking; or, if one must read, read Homer, Milton, Gibbon, who cannot harm the brain."

Two of the young Trevor-Roper's close friends were Gilbert Ryle and A.J. Ayer, leading figures in analytical philosophy at Oxford. Ryle mocked Trevor-Roper's fox hunting, at which he on several occasions fell off his mount—once breaking his back—allowing Ryle to claim that Hugh had "a bad case of Tallyhosis." Ayer said he "admired his intellectual elegance, appreciated his malice, and was delighted to find that he shared my anti-clericalism and irreverence for authority." Not everywhere was the quality of malice so highly valued as it was in the Oxford of the 1930s.

With the onset of World War II, Trevor-Roper began as a lieutenant in the Territorial Army, but was soon transferred to the Secret Intelligence Service, where he worked, with considerable success, at breaking German radio codes. Ryle and the philosopher Stuart Hampshire were part of his Radio Analysis Bureau, later called the Radio Intelligence Service. Sisman devotes several pages to the bureaucratic infighting within the British intelligence services; Trevor-Roper's position in these matters was never conciliatory. One of his superiors claimed that his "passion for being different from ordinary mortals amounts to insubordination." He suffered fools not at all, and one had only to disagree with him to qualify as a fool. What must have made this all the more infuriating is that he seems to have been correct much of the time.

Reading this section of Sisman's biography, one is reminded how much more intellectuals, making use of their minds,

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contributed to the British war effort than did their American counterparts. Graham Greene, Malcolm Muggeridge, Isaiah Berlin, Ryle, Hampshire, Ayer, Trevor-Roper, and many other English intellectuals had significant jobs during the war. Let us not forget Kim Philby, who puts in a cameo role here and may, as a spy for the Soviet Union, have done the most significant work of all.

Trevor-Roper had "a good war." He ended it as a major, and soon after was given the authority of a major-general to interrogate Nazi prisoners for a report on the final days of the Nazi high command. The significance of the report was to put an end to wild speculation about the whereabouts of Hitler, and it established in hard fact that he was dead—of a pistol he shot into his mouth while, beside him, Eva Braun swallowed poisoned pills, their bodies both subsequently burned in the garden of their bunker in Berlin—and not off in South America, waiting to give world domination a second shot. Trevor-Roper is the man who, historically if not literally, buried Adolf Hitler.

This he did with a fineness of detail, a thoroughness of argument, and a Gibbonian majesty, writing contemporary history through the long-sighted but clear lens of the past. Toward the close of his book, *apropos* of Ribbentrop, Schellenberg, Schwerin von Krosigk, and others, living in their "intellectual fools' paradise," Trevor-Roper writes: "We are reminded of the court-parasites of the Roman Empire, of whom Juvenal wrote: the bad jokes of Fortune—village pierrots yesterday, arbiters of life and death today, tomorrow keepers of the public latrines." He subsequently turned his report on the final days of the German high command into a book, *The Last Days of Hitler* (1947), which became an international bestseller and established him as an expert on all things Nazi.

With some of the proceeds from *The Last Days of Hitler*, its author acquired and took to tooling around Oxford in a Bentley. He did all he could to fortify the reputation invested in the undergraduates' name for him of Pleasure-Loper. When George VI and the queen visited Christ Church on the 400th anniversary of its founding, Trevor-Roper, in a letter to his friend Solly Zuckerman, wrote: "I signalised Their Majesties visit by extreme intoxication. My hand still trembles, my mind is cloudy, and I am crippled by mysterious bruises."

Teaching undergraduates was not sufficient to hold a man of Trevor-Roper's ambition. He was in search of that book that might give him lasting fame. But on what subject, precisely? He had, in the meantime, begun to write his attacks on other historians, which gave him his reputation as an intellectual liquidator, a terminator, a historian killer, a reputation in which he exulted. He loved controversy, and with a sharp mind, vast learning, and a prose style that could function as a deadly weapon, he was handsomely equipped for it.

Baron Dacre of Glanton, 2002

When Trevor-Roper attacked R.H. Tawney's theory of the progressive bourgeois giving rise to the Puritan revolution in England, one of the editors of the journal to which he sent his attack wrote to his coeditor: "I find it difficult to decide whether T-R is a fundamentally nice person in the grip of a prose style in which it is impossible to be polite or a fundamentally unpleasant person . . . using rudeness as a disguise for nastiness." Trevor-Roper in polemical mode is reminiscent of no one quite so much as Richard Montague, a henchman of Archbishop Laud, who had, as Trevor-Roper writes in his biography of Laud, "controversial dexterity," and whose "books which he hurled, like apples of discord, into an interested world, were weighted with massive learning and pointed with a stinging wit." Another figure of the time remarked on Montague's "tartness of writing; very sharp the nib of his pen, and much gall in his ink, against such as opposed him."

Well off financially, intellectually settled as an established figure at Oxford, Trevor-Roper's life was still missing two major components: work on the great book and family. The latter was to be put paid to when, at the age of 39, he began seriously to court a married woman named Alexandra Howard-Johnston, seven years older than he and with three children. (Maurice Bowra remarked that he "had never known adultery to do so much for a man.") She was the daughter of Field Marshal Haig of World War I fame, and her husband, a belligerent man known to beat her, was a rear-admiral. Sisman is especially good at the complications of the courtship and Trevor-Roper and his wife's far-from-easy relationship after they had settled into marriage.

Known as "Xandra," Mrs. Trevor-Roper was, as her first husband had warned him, a "luxury girl," for which read, in the parlance of our day, "high maintenance." She was also an aristocracy snob, as was Trevor-Roper. The combination, with three children added, was perhaps more family life than Trevor-Roper had bargained for. Certainly it put pressure on him to earn more money than a don might normally do; this meant doing lots of journalism, much of it for the *Times*, including much political reporting in foreign quarters. He had no aptitude for fatherhood, let alone the more difficult proposition of stepfatherhood, and living with so emo-

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tionally volatile a woman as Xandra did not represent a daily walk in the park. Yet Trevor-Roper was never other than a loyal, and almost always a solicitous, husband, which could not have been all that easy for a man who appears to have been one of nature's true bachelors.

Trevor-Roper at his most humane is available in his letters to Bernard Berenson, which have been printed as *Letters from Oxford* (2006). The letters, begun in 1947 and running until Berenson's death in 1959, are filled with rich gossip ("Now what new indiscretions can I offer you?"), and jolly malice is their reigning tone ("The new prophet of darkness is apparently a man called Oakeshott, who is alleged to advance his appeals to unreason with great brilliance; which however, having met him, I doubt.").

England had a richer cast of comic characters in those years, and Trevor-Roper makes splendid use of them. Here he is describing the social-climbing publisher George Weidenfeld's rich (Marks and Spencer heiress) wife leaving him:

> As she surveyed the debris of her husband's last party, at which she had carried round drinks, with ever-increasing ennui, to ever giddier groups of loquacious peeresses, gossip-writers, fashionable novelists, and professional party-goers, and saw the carnage of empty champagne bottles, crushed lobster-shells and trodden caviar, she decided she could bear it no longer.

He recounts to the old man, B.B., locked in the fastness of his opulent Italian villa I Tatti, Oxford college elections as if they were battles upon the plains of Greece. After a full budget of gossipy news to Berenson's dear friend Nicky Mariano, he writes: "We shall have to confine our conversation, *faute de mieux*, to the Good, the True and the Beautiful."

Trevor-Roper's self-appointed role was that of cavalier intellectual, with ties (through his wife) to the *beau monde*, always intellectually dazzling, immensely learned, never wrong. He made enemies quite as easily as he made friends, and seems to have cherished the two equally. One of the most relentless among his enemies was Evelyn Waugh. What set Waugh against Trevor-Roper was the latter's relentless anticlericalism, especially his anti-Catholicism, the church to which Waugh himself was a convert. A woman once remarked to Waugh that, though he claimed to be a Christian, he was one of the most unpleasant men she had ever met. Did he not, she asked, sense any contradiction here? "None at all, Madame," Waugh is supposed to have responded. "But just imagine me if I weren't a Christian."

Whenever possible larding his prose with zingers to set what he invariably called "the papists'" tempers aflame, Trevor-Roper enjoyed (as he once put it) their "agonized and desperate writhings." He always saved a poisoned dart for Waugh, a convert, and therefore a member of "a tribe that distinguishes itself by doctrinal ferocity, not always accompanied by knowledge." Waugh made it a point never to call him anything other than "Roper," and let no chance pass without saying something damning about him and the paucity of his achievements. Trevor-Roper never granted Waugh intellectual respect, but did acknowledge that in face-to-face confrontations he could not win, owing to Waugh's superior rudeness.

A fairly regular refrain in Sisman has Trevor-Roper returning to his study to begin work on a new book: on Oliver Cromwell, on the English Revolution, on Scotland, on English Catholicism, and so many more. In his review of this biography in the *London Review of Books*, Neal Ascherson counted no fewer than nine such uncompleted books. Some of these were worked on extensively and a few made their appearance as extended essays. "Enchanted cigarettes" Balzac called those books authors dream of but never get around to writing; Trevor-Roper smoked enough of them to acquire the intellectual equivalent of lung cancer.

Was it perfectionism that stopped Trevor-Roper from writing his great book? Or was he guilty of the kind of sloth that goads a man to do 15 other things in place of the one thing he should be doing? He certainly did the 15 other things, what with lecturing at foreign universities, turning out lots of journalism and book reviews, maintaining a costly domestic establishment, bucking up an easily demoralized wife, continuing his wide reading, indulging his never-slackening passion for travel; the great book somehow never got written.

One fine book did, though, and this is *Hermit of Peking: The Hidden Life of Sir Edmund Backhouse* (1976), his study of the English Sinologist, a charlatan and fantasist who was one of the great literary frauds of the modern era. With a novelistic feeling for pace and character, Trevor-Roper tracks down Backhouse (1873-1944), who was a British spy in China during World War I, negotiated fraudulent business deals, and collected Chinese manuscripts, vast quantities of which he donated to the Bodleian Library, hoping thereby to acquire a professorship until it was discovered that many among them he forged.

Hermit of Peking is a book in the tradition of, and of no less quality than, A.J.A. Symons's classic *Quest for Corvo*. Both are investigations of human nature at its oddest. Immensely readable as a work of detection of the highest order, *Hermit of Peking* is also a reminder that Trevor-Roper (as Sisman says) considered himself "a writer first, and an historian second."

In 1979, quite out of the blue, Trevor-Roper received an invitation to become Master of Peterhouse, the oldest and smallest of Cambridge's colleges. Earlier in the same year he had been made a peer, Lord Dacre of Glanton, an honor bestowed upon him by Margaret Thatcher. The two events conjoined made actual Evelyn Waugh's exasperated wish, in one of their exchanges, that Trevor-Roper change his name and move to Cambridge. Apart from the emoluments—a fine master's house, a famously good college kitchen, and an excellent wine cellar—Trevor-Roper took on the job because it extended his academic life by six years. He should have had to retire as Regius Professor in 1981 at the age of 67, but was allowed to stay on as Master of Peterhouse until 1987.

In the event, it wasn't a good move.

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Peterhouse turned out to be a hornet's nest of intramural controversy. So reactionary were the majority of fellows that the force of their general unpleasantness turned Trevor-Roper, who could never rest content for long in a condition of conformity, into a reformer. The most vicious academic squabbling set in, never to be resolved, and at the end of his term as master, Trevor-Roper allowed that his seven years at Peterhouse were wasted.

In 1983, in the midst of the Peterhouse years, documents claiming to be Hitler's private diaries surfaced, discovered by the German weekly *Stern*. If authentic, this would have been a momentous historical event, promising an extended gaze into the heart and mind of perhaps the most evil man in modern, if not world, history. Times Newspapers thought to buy English rights to the diaries, but they first wanted Trevor-Roper, who was at the time a director of the corporation, to authenticate them. Trevor-Roper's agent, A.D. Peters, was able to extract a handsome fee for him to do so. And after much last moment hesitation, authenticate them he did—wrongly.

Here was the former Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, the current Master of Peterhouse at Cambridge, zestfully spending much of his life pointing out the errors, the intellectual shortcomings, the slovenliness, if not outright fraudulence, of others who had now himself, at the age of 69, made the howler of howlers, and on the world stage. One has to imagine the family-values politician caught emerging from a male bordello, the menacing class bully wetting his trousers at the blackboard.

The sky darkened with chickens coming home to roost; deafening was noise from the licking of chops. A.L. Rowse, Conor Cruise O'Brien, Bernard Crick, all Trevor-Roper's old enemies, lined up to hurl their brickbats at him. *Private Eye* ran a lengthy piece called "My Days of Agony by Lord Lucre of Glenlivet (better known as Sir Hugh Very-Ropey)." Auberon Waugh, standing in for his now-deceased father, suggested that Trevor-Roper change his sex and move to Essex. Columnists weighed in against him. Adam Sisman notes that Trevor-Roper took all this abuse without outward complaint. Nor did he allow his anguish to show, though Sisman recounts a lunch at which Trevor-Roper was late and his older stepson found him "lying in a foetal position on a bed in a spare room, his face turned to the wall." Sisman concludes that "the damage to his reputation was substantial and long-lasting." Not a few obituaries at his death led with this great embarrassing international *faux pas*.

Hubris, got up in the lifelong habiliments of flamboyant arrogance, met its just end—or so some might say. Yet Trevor-Roper rode out this major defeat and continued to write, turning out superior essays right up until his death at 89 in 2003. A recently (posthumously) published collection of essays, *History and the Enlightenment* (Yale), displays him at the top of his excellent game. The essays demonstrate what should have been evident all along: Hugh Trevor-Roper was a better historiographer, or student of the history and theory of history, than he was a historian. His contemporary, Arnaldo Momigliano, the great historiographer of the ancient world, also failed to write a great book. Perhaps what explains the inability of both men to write that single imperishable historical work is that they understood too well the many pitfalls of writing history.

Sisman ends by writing that Hugh Trevor-Roper's "work will continue to be read long after his blunder [with the Hitler diaries] has diminished into a mere footnote." Surely this is correct. Trevor-Roper deserves to be remembered as a devastating polemicist; an elegant prose stylist, one of the most suave of the past century; and an Oxbridge figure of the kind that, much to the loss of contemporary intellectual life, has now departed the planet, off not to a better world but perhaps to a place where the air is thick with the smoke of enchanted cigarettes, and playful malice is greatly appreciated. ♦

B&A

Getting and Giving

The first family of American patronage of the arts.

BY MARTIN MORSE WOOSTER

Study the histories of the creators of great fortunes and you'll find a familiar pattern. The heroic capitalists whose innovative ideas resulted in great wealth tend to be libertarians or conservatives who strongly support the free enterprise system that made their fortunes possible. Their children, naturally rebelling against their parents, are usually far more liberal than their parents. Their grandchildren, comfortably ensconced with trust funds that obviate the need to work, sometimes become political radicals who use their inheritances to advance a socialist agenda. So it is with the Rockefellers. John D. Rockefeller was, of course, among the most rugged and ruthless of the wealth creators who flourished more than a century ago. His son, John D. Rockefeller Jr. (commonly referred to as "Junior") was more liberal than his father but still had many conservative instincts. Junior's children ranged from liberal Republicans (Nelson) to reflexive leftists (John D. 3rd).

America's Medicis
The Rockefellers and Their Astonishing Cultural Legacy
by Suzanne Loebl
Harper, 448 pp., $34.99

You can view the Rockefeller saga in all sorts of ways, and Suzanne Loebl is

Martin Morse Wooster, senior fellow at the Capital Research Center, is the author, most recently, of Great Philanthropic Mistakes.

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the first to write a book that focuses on the passion that John D. Rockefeller Jr., his wife Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, and their children Nelson, David, Laurance, and John D. 3rd had for art collecting.

America's Medicis is simultaneously boring and fawning: For her, the Rockefellers were not just collectors, but a "legendary family" comparable to the Medicis in their munificence. "America's artistic landscape would be totally different were it not for the Rockefellers," writes Loebl.

It is true that, without Rockefeller money, such important museums as the Cloisters, the Museum of Modern Art, and Colonial Williamsburg would not have been created. But it's also likely that had the Rockefellers not been buying art, Andrew and Paul Mellon, Henry Clay Frick, J. Paul Getty, or other major patrons of the era would have acquired for their museums most of the great art the Rockefellers purchased. John D. Rockefeller Jr. was correct when he said that his purchases of art were morally legitimate because "they would in time probably come into public possession through their ownership by museums."

Loebl is as transfixed by the greatness of the Rockefellers as a deer is by the headlights of a car, so she drains her story of conflict and passion. And much of this volume consists of lengthy lists of every piece of art any Rockefeller ever acquired, right down to the bird carvings acquired by Nelson's son Steven for a tiny museum in Maine. Unfortunately, Loebl's obsequiousness causes her to miss important incidents that help us understand the history of Rockefeller philanthropy. For example, in one chapter she dutifully tells the story of how John D. Jr., attending the annual convention of Phi Beta Kappa in 1924, heard the Rev. W.A.R. Goodwin of Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg talk about the need to restore the town's crumbling colonial buildings. Junior visited Williamsburg in 1926, and ultimately donated more than $60 million towards its restoration.

Yet Loebl ignores the battle that took place between John D. Jr. and John D. 3rd over Colonial Williamsburg in the late 1940s. The younger Rockefeller, looking for a philanthropic project, seized on the idea of turning Williamsburg into an anti-Communist think tank designed to promote democracy. Had John D. 3rd had his way, we might have had a Williamsburg Institute as lavishly funded as Brookings or Aspen. But Junior fought back, purging his son from the Colonial Williamsburg board in 1950 and insisting that Rockefeller money be used strictly for restoration. (John D. 3rd then switched his attention to funding population control programs.)

John D. Rockefeller Senior and Junior, 1921

TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

America's Medicis does have some insights into the Rockefellers. Loebl reminds us that John D. Rockefeller Jr. was often thoughtful and sensible. Junior was, by the standards of his time, a liberal who did nothing to prevent the Rockefeller Foundation's drift to the left. But his political positions were often reasonable: For example, like his father and grandfather, Junior was a fervent teetotaler. But as Daniel Okrent showed in *Last Call*, John D. Rockefeller Jr. did as much as any private citizen to end Prohibition by defunding the Anti-Saloon League after 1926 and by publicly stating, in 1932, that Prohibition was unworkable and should be repealed.

Moreover, John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s taste in art was quite refined. His most personal project is the Cloisters, located on one of the highest points in Manhattan. In the 1920s, Junior began working with George Grey Barnard, a sculptor who collected remnants of French medieval cathedrals and shipped them to the United States. Barnard donated his collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but Junior decided to create a building for Barnard's collection and the other medieval works he purchased and enjoyed, such as the seven very large Unicorn Tapestries created around 1500. The Cloisters, opened in 1938, is operated by the Metropolitan Museum but would never have existed without John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s vision and taste. It remains the crowning achievement of Rockefeller arts funding.

John D. Rockefeller Jr. influenced art a third way by limiting the spending of his wife, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, who fell in love with modern art at an early stage. Junior's response was to ban his wife from spending more than $1,000 on anything modern; Abby's response to that was to spend money she inherited on smaller works by young, struggling artists. She also worked with other donors to fund the Museum of Modern Art, and in 1934, Junior relented and allowed his wife to spend more money on contemporary art. After Abby Rockefeller's death in 1948, Junior chose to honor his wife's memory by making gifts to the Museum of Modern Art which ultimately totaled over $4 million.

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One of Abby Rockefeller's favorite artists was the Mexican Communist Diego Rivera who, in 1931, obtained a commission to paint a mural for the new Rockefeller Center. In his wisdom, Rivera created a mural where, on the left, plutocrats and society matrons played cards under a cloud of syphilis and gonorrhea germs, while on the right, workers were being clubbed by police officers. "The dominant color is red," one New York newspaper wrote, "red headdresses, red flags. Waves of red."

"Mrs. Rockefeller said she likes my painting very much," Rivera said. "Mr. Rockefeller likes it too." But as soon as Rivera began to paint Lenin into the fresco the Rockefellers objected and the mural was, at first, boarded up and then destroyed in 1934. Rivera re-created it in Mexico City, making sure that Junior was added to the group of plutocrats doomed by venereal disease.

Most of John and Abby Rockefeller's children bought art. John D. 3rd continued his father's interest in Asian art and bought many Japanese sculptures, paintings, and prints, which he gave to the Asia Society. David Rockefeller bought a great deal of art for the Chase Manhattan Bank (which he chaired for many years) and also served as chairman of the Museum of Modern Art's board for over a decade, steering it through several financial crises in the 1980s and '90s. David has said that, when he dies, MoMA will get $100 million from his estate. But the most passionate art collector of his generation was Nelson Rockefeller. Buying art seems to have been a form of therapy for him. His chief art adviser, René d'Harnoncourt, recalled that, during his two years as vice president in the Ford administration, when Rockefeller would enter late Friday afternoon

> absolutely gray-green from overwork, his idea of a relaxing rest was to take a night plane with me to the West Coast, arrive at nine A.M. and carefully examine some 1000 pieces of primitive art, of which he would buy about 40. He returned to Washington on the next night plane looking refreshed, rosy-cheeked, and as fit as after a vacation. ♦

B&A

The Martin Effect

Setting the stage for a bluegrass revival?

BY MICHAEL TAUBE

In concert in Austin, 2010

FILMMAGIC / GARY MILLER

Last year, a bluegrass musician took America by storm. A liberal Democrat by political persuasion, he's had a storied career as a comedian, actor, and author/playwright. He also just might be the one person who can help bluegrass music reach greater heights and a wider audience. Who is it? Steve Martin.

At January's Grammy Awards, Martin won Best Bluegrass Album for *The Crow: New Songs for the Five-String Banjo*. It's his second musical Grammy: In 2002, he was part of a supergroup that won for Best Country Instrumental Performance with their version of "Foggy Mountain Breakdown." Yet this award was the crown jewel in an incredible musical year for Martin, who has been playing the banjo for 45 years. Earlier, he was named Billboard Music's Bluegrass Artist of the Year and earned Bluegrass Album of the Year. *The Crow* was ranked number one on Billboard for half of 2009, and was still number three this past July. Martin was also nominated for six International Bluegrass Awards.

When he was invited to play on bluegrass musician Tony Trischka's album *Double Banjo Bluegrass Spectacular*, released in 2007, Martin said that there were "at least 500 banjo players better than me that could score on traditional tunes." Perhaps—but the 501st-best banjo player has the talent and personality to attract legions of new fans to come along for the ride.

I wasn't one of them, since I was already a fan. In all likelihood, I'm one of the most unusual individuals to have become a faithful follower of the bluegrass sound. That is, unless you know of other Jewish-born, nonreligious, politically and socially conservative, urbanite Canadian bluegrass fans. If so, I stand corrected. Briefly, my musical tastes have always leaned on the slightly schizophrenic side: I primarily listen to jazz and classical music, and my contemporary tastes veer toward heavy

Michael Taube is a writer in Toronto.

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metal and alternative. But when it comes to country music, while I like some—Hank Williams Sr., Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, Charlie Daniels, Oak Ridge Boys, Alabama—I've never been a fan. And don't get me started on that distasteful sound known as New Country.

Bluegrass is different. I love its beautiful simplicity, including the upbeat tempos, melodic harmonies, acoustic merriment, and poignant lyrics. It's a unique subgenre of country music, established in the 1940s, with healthy dashes of roots music (including gospel and old time), Scottish and Irish sounds, as well as the occasional tantalizing hint of jazz and blues tucked in. Unlike their country cousins, bluegrass performers use acoustic instruments with strings such as the banjo, fiddle, mandolin, and resonator guitar to create rich, robust, and boisterous sounds.

Some of the original bluegrass performers include Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs and their group, the Foggy Mountain Boys; the Osborne Brothers; Jimmy Martin; and the "father of bluegrass," Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys. (Monroe once said jokingly, "Bluegrass is wonderful music. I'm glad I originated it.") Neil V. Rosenberg, in *Bluegrass: A History*, examined Monroe's successful run during 1946-49:

> He played as far west as Oklahoma, as far north as Ontario, Canada, and he developed a strong following in the upper South and adjacent mid-western and mid-Atlantic states. His tours were enlivened by the baseball team which by 1949 had become so popular that he created a second club and was hiring professional players. His records were played frequently on jukeboxes and sold well at record stores. His most popular songs were "covered" or copied by a host of other performers, including popular contemporaries like Pee Wee King and his Golden West Cowboys and venerable old-timers like Bradley Kincaid. He began these years with a band still remembered as his best, one which brought his musical ideals closer to realization than any previous band. Indeed the sound of this particular team of Blue Grass Boys was so popular and familiar that by 1948 other groups were copying it even when they were not playing Bill's songs.

But it wasn't just Monroe who was able to popularize bluegrass tunes. Flatt and Scruggs wrote popular theme songs for *The Beverly Hillbillies* ("The Ballad of Jed Clampett") and *Petticoat Junction*. Movies such as *Bonnie and Clyde*, *Deliverance*, and *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* have exposed people to bluegrass, old time, and gospel songs. And acclaimed bluegrass albums by 26-time Grammy-winner Alison Krauss and Dolly Parton (she won a 2001 Grammy for Best Bluegrass Album) have captured the public's imagination.

Like most musical styles, bluegrass has experienced many transformations since its inception. Most performers still fit within the three major subcategories: traditional (classic, country-like sound with acoustic instruments), progressive (sometimes called "newgrass," with electric sounds and hints of rock music), and gospel. Neo-traditional bluegrass bands are currently on the rise. (A Chinese quartet, Red Chamber, uses traditional Chinese instruments in a great album appropriately entitled *Redgrass*.)

Today's bluegrass is also well served by its current crop of participants. Thanks to Rounder Records, which specializes in roots music such as bluegrass, and its project manager, Amy Gaudreau, I was able to get a good sampling. I already knew of The Grascals, a talented six-piece outfit with one of America's best banjo players, Kristin Scott Benson. Their second album, *The Famous Lefty Flynn's*, is superb: Take a listen to their version of "Last Train to Clarksville," which makes The Monkees' original sound like a garage band cover, and their stunning rendition of "Son of a Sawmill Man." Summertown Road's excellent self-titled debut album combines traditional sounds with a folksy modern feel. Some standout tracks include "If I Win," "Too Much of a Good Thing," and, inspired by their home state, "That's Kentucky." Blue Highway's *Some Day: The Fifteenth Anniversary Collection* is a perfect accompaniment to the multiple Grammy-nominated bluegrass band's incredible career, including the tracks "Marbletown" and "Seven Sundays in a Row."

Yet the *pièce de résistance* from Rounder's bag of goodies is Steve Martin's album. In many ways, it's the culmination of a long musical journey: Some of his songs were written over 40 years ago, and a small handful (including "Hoedown at Alice's," "Freddie's Lilt," and "Banana Banjo") appeared in rudimentary form on his 1981 comedy album, *The Steve Martin Brothers*. This incredible effort, hilariously summarized in the liner notes as "the most expensive banjo album in the history of the universe and that includes possible alternative universes, too," is a musical triumph.

It's nearly impossible to describe how stunning *The Crow* is: There isn't a weak track on the entire album. Many songs, including "Daddy Played the Banjo," "Pitkin County Turnaround," "Wally on the Run," and "The Crow" epitomize the traditional bluegrass sound with a stunning banjo backdrop. The 86-year-old Scruggs plays on two tracks, including one that features Vince Gill and Dolly Parton on vocals. A comedy/bluegrass track, "Late For School," is Martin's only singing performance.

The Crow's success could have a bigger impact for bluegrass than either the *Deliverance* or *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* soundtracks. As a successful comic/actor known throughout the world (and possible alternative universes), Steve Martin could bring new fans to bluegrass music from across North America and beyond. As a liberal he could help ease snobbery and distaste for Southern-inspired/religious-themed music in certain circles, and as a great banjo player he could show that talent, hard work, and love of music can ultimately lead to great success and critical acclaim.

"Talking about music is like dancing about architecture," Steve Martin has said, repeating a declaration made by many others. He needs to dance less like Frank Gehry or Frank Lloyd Wright and talk more like Bill Monroe and Earl Scruggs. And if he does, the unlikeliest person ever to have become an award-winning musician will help bluegrass become one of the defining musical styles of our generation. ♦

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B&A

Notes to Self

A peek at the sketches for works in progress.

BY ABIGAIL LAVIN

From the notebook of industrial designer Carl Liu

Shanghai

There is something deliciously transgressive about rifling through other people's notebooks, the experience mediated only by a pair of cotton gloves and a hovering student volunteer from Tongji University here.

Permission to snoop comes courtesy of *Detour: The Moleskine Notebook Experience*, a traveling exhibition of Moleskine-brand notebooks that has recently made its way to Shanghai after traveling to London, New York, Paris, Berlin, Istanbul, Tokyo, and Venice, collecting new additions from various creative types along the way. The Shanghai stop features 50-odd notebooks, almost all of which visitors are free to thumb through as they please. The exhibit is hosted on Shanghai's historic waterfront, in a charming 1923 neoclassical building that was once the national headquarters of the Chartered Bank of India, Australia, and China and today is home to a high-end shopping arcade featuring Cartier and Zegna flagship boutiques and a few of the city's swankiest nightclubs and restaurants.

It's a fitting space to showcase Moleskine, a brand whose identity relies heavily on tenuous claims to a historic pedigree. Launched in 1997 by Italian company Modo and Modo, Moleskine owes its success to a clever marketing campaign associating the "legendary" notebook with iconic artists who reportedly carried similar pocket-sized journals, including Picasso, Hemingway, and Van Gogh. "It's an exaggeration," Modo and Modo spokesman Francesco Franceschi told the *New York Times* in 2004. "It's marketing, not science. It's not the absolute truth."

Expertly curated by Rafaella Guidobono, *Detour* affirms the brand's *bona fides* as the notebook of choice for the creative classes by association with living, breathing artists, from China's beloved bad-boy blogger Han Han to Swiss art critic Hans-Ulrich Obrist to the Italian cellist and composer Giovanni Sollima.

The artists involved are not confined to mere scribbling or sketching, and the exhibit strikes an excellent balance of participants using the notebooks to varied ends. The designers Jenny Ji and Tord Boontje sculpt delicate paper cuts from their notebooks. Joep van Lieshout encases his notebook in a cream-colored sponge. The Moleskine peeking through the sponge resembles the yolk of a rotten egg. Lyndon Neri and Rossana Hu scallop their notebook to resemble grooves in a vinyl record; the view from the back page evokes the view from the top of a steep staircase.

The most gratifying notebooks to flip through are the ones that give the illusion that their authors produced them for use in "real life," not to shill for Moleskine. The architect Kazuyo Sejima's notebook, which contains just five pages of hasty amoeba-like pencil drawings, seems flagrantly phoned in. In contrast, film director Jia Zhangke filled up two entire books with his jottings, and the industrial designers Carl Liu and Giuseppe Amato filled their notebooks to the brim with technical drawings and calculations. It seems a miracle they were willing to hand them over to the curator. Of course, sometimes less is more: The contribution from Icelandic post-rock band Sigur Rós is just two pages long, but with its velvety black and periwinkle inkblots so perfectly capturing the movement of birds in flight, it is one of the exhibition's most striking works.

There is one conspicuous absence at *Detour*: the work of Chinese artist and dissident Ai Weiwei, who is listed as one of the 28 Chinese artists to have contributed to the exhibition. Despite having designed Beijing's famed Bird's Nest stadium, Ai is *persona non grata* with the government for his vocal criticism of its response to the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan (for which he was reportedly beaten by police, resulting in a cerebral hemorrhage) and of the "fake smile" propaganda surrounding the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Most recently, Ai was placed under house arrest last month, reportedly to quell a planned protest over the demolition of his Shanghai studio. The official line from Moleskine is that Ai cancelled his participation because he wasn't able to complete his notebook in time for the opening, but one has to raise an eyebrow at this.

Censorship notwithstanding, *Detour* has been a masterful branding exercise: The logos are unobtrusive; the content compelling; the experience interactive. And for all the talk about the notebook's historic connection to Western artistic elites, Shanghai may be the perfect place for the brand to get in touch with its roots. After all, the majority of Moleskine products are made in China. ♦

COURTESY OF MOLESKINE

Abigail Lavin is a writer in Shanghai.

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B&A

The Olivier of Parody

Leslie Nielsen, 1926-2010 **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

Was any famously pithy aphorism ever more totally and astoundingly wrong than F. Scott Fitzgerald's "there are no second acts in American lives"? It is far easier to think of creative people who violate Fitzgerald's rule than it is to think of a single person, aside from Ralph Ellison, for whom it has been true.

If anything characterizes American life, it is the way in which the country not only permits but actively encourages, and even requires, reinvention. This notion has become axiomatic in rah-rah business writing, which assures would-be entrepreneurs that failure, even catastrophic failure, is a necessary prologue to success. In fact, having a second act is now so central to the American success story that it seems necessary for a successful person in his first act to claim he's already failed somehow ("I was fired from my first record label when I was 14") since, if he has already been through his failure spiral, he won't have to experience the inevitable terrifying trough.

Case in point: James Kaplan's ridiculous new 700-plus-page biography of the first half of Frank Sinatra's life offers a mythologized account of the course of Sinatra's first 13 years as a star. *Frank: The Voice* elevates Sinatra to an Olympian height the singer did not actually reach so as to portray the three-year downturn in his fortunes as equivalent to Icarus's fall. Reading Kaplan's *Frank: The Voice*, Justin Bieber and Miley Cyrus and the cast of *Glee* would have every reason to live in fear of the moment when their first-act curtain comes down. The prosaic truth—Sinatra had come to the end of his long public boyhood and the rather brief break in his fortunes gave him time to figure out how to make his way as an adult—is that the United States is the country of chances, first, second, seventh.

Last week, one of the great reinvention stories in pop-culture history came to an end when Leslie Nielsen died at the age of 84. In the 1960s and '70s, he appeared on countless shows and made-for-small-screen movies as a stiff-jawed authority figure. That was actually his second act. He got the later TV parts not because he was especially good at them but because he had cachet from once having been a leading man in the movies. MGM had put him in some top-line roles in the 1950s, most notably the science-fiction classic *Forbidden Planet*, which was stolen from him by the far more emotive Robby the Robot.

Doctor Rumack in 'Airplane!'

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

An ur-White Man, Nielsen was headed for the junk pile by 1980. The kinds of parts he was playing—mayors, judges, police chiefs—were beginning to become the exclusive purview of blacks and women. Then came one of those breaks, such as when Frank Sinatra inadvertently encountered an arranger named Nelson Riddle and began the association that would reinvent the American song. Nielsen was cast in a comedy called *Airplane!* because its writer-directors (Jerry and David Zucker and Jim Abrahams) wanted Nielsen to play exactly one of his usual parts—a humorless, self-serious, monotonous doctor—in his usual manner. Except that everything he would say and do would be beyond preposterous.

They cast a bunch of other TV White Men, too (Peter Graves of *Mission Impossible*, Lloyd Bridges of *Sea Hunt*, Robert Stack of *The Untouchables*). But there was something different dancing in Nielsen's 54-year-old eyes—a kind of madness informing his character's pomposity. Nielsen knew he had to play it straight, and it turned out that when it came to playing comedy straight, he wasn't a has-been-never-quite-was; he was the Olivier of parody.

The Zuckers and Abrahams saw it, too, and after the wild success of *Airplane!* they created a television series for him called *Police Squad!* that would fail but would (second act) spawn a monstrous hit called *The Naked Gun*, which would spawn two sequels starring Nielsen as Frank Drebin, the dumbest, most violent, and most hapless cop on the planet. He went on to play an exorcist in a takeoff (*Repossessed*), to inhabit Dracula for Mel Brooks, to fill Harrison Ford's clown shoes in *The Fugitive* (*Wrongfully Accused*). None of them was all that good, but Nielsen was never less than a joy to watch.

The lesson of Leslie Nielsen's life is a classically American one. The Tammany Hall boss George Washington Plunkitt said of himself, "I seen my opportunities and I took 'em." He did what he could with what he had, and when the moment to explode arrived, he was ready for it. "Take whatever they offer," David Zucker says Nielsen told his agent after he auditioned for *Airplane!* "I'd pay them to do this."

F. Scott Fitzgerald didn't count on the fact that, sometimes, all you need for a second act is to stick around for the curtain to rise again, and then work your heart out. ♦

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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"Obama makes nice with ascendant Republicans: Camp David retreat is on the president's list of peace offerings"
—The Hill *headline, December 1, 2010*

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Republicans gladly accept Camp David invitation

OBAMA'S PRESENCE 'OPTIONAL'

GOP also looking forward to using swimming pool, bowling alley

BY SHAILAGH MURRAY

SABRINA MATUS

GOP leaders pledge not to "naturally" warm Camp David pool.

During last week's meeting with House and Senate Republicans, President Obama expressed optimism that both sides were willing to make compromises, noting that "I am looking forward to hosting our GOP friends at Camp David." Except that the peace offering involving the presidential retreat was interpreted by Republicans to mean use of the facilities without Obama. "Our understanding is that the president was willing to offer up some of his executive amenities," explained Rep. John Boehner (R-Oh.), presumably the next speaker of the House. "Our people could really use a respite, away from the Beltway and especially away from the president."

Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), however, did say his members have a few concerns about such a gesture. Among his party's questions, said the Senate minority leader, were whether or not the swimming pool was heated in the winter and if the bar inside the main lodge would be fully stocked. "We need to know if we can just show up or do we have to bring our own booze and snacks." Boehner added that the American people need not worry about the GOP making use of Camp David. "Mitch and I promise to leave the place spotless. This is our pledge to America."

While some Republicans were eager to fish in the local trout stream, others were hoping to play a few rounds of golf. Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.) said he personally looked forward to bowhunting for deer in the Catoctin Mountains, then serving it for dinner and preserving the rest as venison jerky.

According to White House press secretary Robert Gibbs, "Although the president's peace offering was seriously misunderstood, it's possible something can be worked out." But Gibbs also warned that not every wish of the GOP would be fulfilled. "These guys were hoping to use the White House lap pool, tennis court, and bowling alley, as well as the movie theater, not to mention Charlie Rangel's villa in the Dominican Republic during the offseason. It's just not all possible." Gibbs did note that "about the only thing Republicans were wary of using was the hot tub near the South Lawn." The seven-seat "Grandee" hot tub, installed in 1997 during the Clin-

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Wiki bombshell: 'Sarkozy likes Old Spice'

president began using deodorant in 2007

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